

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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William Chillingworth was born in Oxford in 1602. While he was a student at Trinity College he gained a wide reputation as a disputant. While a fellow of that college he was for a short time a convert to the Roman Catholic Church. He returned to the Church of England and wrote his famous defence of the Protestant principles, The Religion of Protestants, a Safe Way to Salvation, which was published in 1637. In 1638 he accepted preferment and became Chancellor of Salisbury Cathedral. From that time the course of his activities was determined by the impending war. Politically he was a staunch Royalist serving actively in the King's armies. He was captured by the Parliamentary forces at Arundel and died in their hands, at Chichester early in 1644.

His theological system, as evidenced in his controversial works, was based on the autonomy of the rational man. The end of the rational quest upon which man is engaged is eternal life. The rational man enjoys complete freedom to pursue this end. God has investigated this rational freedom in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ. God's self-participation in man's rational state enables man to enjoy the freedom created by God. God's revelation of his nature and man's freedom is transmitted to man in the Bible. Holy Scripture is the record of God's timeless, eternal truths to which man assents in mind and will when he



Use other side if necessary.

truly follows God.

Chillingworth, therefore, bases his defence of Protestantism upon the fact that man is rational and that he has this record of God's truth. Men are directed, by the Bible, only to God and not to any other man for their salvation. The Church is the society of men who follow the truths of God. He concludes that the Church ought to be organized around a minimum creedal statement, but that it must emphasize the personal moral life. All that is necessary for the Church is that it should direct men to Heaven by the shortest possible route.

Chillingworth's defence of the Protestant principle was actually a defence of the Protestantism of the private conscience. It was not, in any sense, a systematic presentation of the radical nature of faith, nor of the doctrine of justification by faith. Its basis in the rational autonomy of man was a link with the Scholastics and Humanists of the Renaissance, and he bypassed the Reformation to a great extent. His adherence to the principle of the centrality of the Word of God was modified by his view of the Bible as the revelation of timeless, eternal truths. He adopted, on the whole, those principles that were to govern orthodox Protestantism for more than two centuries.

WILLIAM CHILLINGWORTH (1602-1644):
CHURCHMAN AND CONTROVERSIALIST

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of Divinity
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In Partial Fulfillment
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by

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PREFACE

After more than two hundred years of popularity the works of William Chillingworth are now almost completely neglected. Nevertheless, the issues raised in that seventeenth century controversy are still alive and gain new relevance in the contemporary struggle for a distinctively Protestant theology.

Chillingworth's defence of Protestant principles was based on the Renaissance doctrine of man's autonomy. The most apt term for his theology is anti-Roman. As befits his view of man he carried on his controversy in isolation: he looked back to no great masters in the Protestant tradition. He chose to defend the Protestant principles with the arguments that later became basic for orthodox Protestantism. An examination of the concepts that he evolved for his own controversy puts some of the issues of present day Protestantism in a clearer light.

The punctuation and spelling in this paper follow standard American usage except in the case of direct quotations from the seventeenth century where I have attempted to preserve something of the flavor of Chillingworth's work by following the early usage and spelling. The tenth edition of The Religion of Protestants was used because it both preserved the early form and gave the variant readings of the first two editions, the only ones

prepared during Chillingworth's lifetime. This edition is the standard text followed by all subsequent editions of the work.

I gratefully acknowledge the help of the librarians and staffs of the New College Library and the National Library of Scotland, both in Edinburgh; the Bodleian Library, Oxford; and the Lambeth Palace Library, London.

I am indebted to Principal C. S. Duthie of the Scottish Congregational College and Professor T. F. Torrance of New College for their suggestions and guidance. A special word of gratitude is due the Reverend Mr. W. B. J. Martin for his helpful criticism, and also to Mrs. G. L. Bell, for her accurate typing of a text containing many alterations. Lastly, a special tribute to my wife for her continuous aid, and to my young son for being patient with his father.

May, 1956.

H. H. M. Jr.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|---|------|
| I. LIFE AND WORK | 1 |
| Birth and student life | 1 |
| The affair of Alexander Gill | 4 |
| Turns to the study of theology | 6 |
| Conversion to the Roman faith | 7 |
| Returns to the Church of England | 11 |
| Writes <u>The Religion of Protestants</u> | 20 |
| Resolves to subscribe to the Thirty-nine | |
| Articles | 29 |
| Wartime activities | 39 |
| Imprisoned in the Tower of London | 41 |
| Attitude toward the War | 44 |
| The siege of Gloucester and last days | 49 |
| II. THE BIBLE ONLY | 57 |
| The search for authority | 57 |
| The necessity of Holy Scripture | 59 |
| The sufficiency and perfection | |
| of Holy Scripture | 69 |
| The authority of Holy Scripture | 79 |
| The perspicuity of Holy Scripture | 83 |
| III. THE CHRISTIAN FAITH | 89 |
| The rationally autonomous man | 89 |
| The religious life is a quest | |
| for salvation | 97 |

CHAPTER

PAGE

| | |
|---|-----|
| V. THE CONTROVERSY WITH ROME | 173 |
| The growth of Chillingworth's theology | |
| in controversy | 173 |
| The basic attack upon the Roman doctrine | |
| of infallibility | 178 |
| Rational attack | 180 |
| Biblical attack | 184 |
| The place of doctrine of infallibility | |
| in Protestantism | 195 |
| The secondary attack upon the Roman | |
| conception of the Church | 196 |
| The meaning and justification | |
| of schism | 197 |
| The Roman Church's lack of | |
| universality | 205 |
| The nature of the Roman failure | 207 |
| VI. THE VIRTUE OF TOLERATION | 210 |
| Chillingworth's role in the developing | |
| theory of toleration | 210 |
| Apparent unorthodox influences | 211 |
| The significance of his defence of Potter | 212 |
| Chillingworth's personal understanding of | |
| the moral demands of Christianity | 213 |
| The true place of man in creation | 217 |

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|--|------|
| The Church and its members | 219 |
| The goal of the Church | 226 |
| The Bible and freedom | 229 |
| Christianity and freedom of opinion | 231 |
| The scope of toleration | 234 |
| The meaning of toleration in practice | 235 |
| The virtue of toleration | 240 |
| VII. CONCLUSION | 242 |
| Summary of Chillingworth's thought | 242 |
| The problem of evaluation | 244 |
| Chillingworth and the Anglican tradition | 246 |
| Broad not mild doctrine | 247 |
| The popularity of <u>The Religion of</u> <u>Protestants</u> | 248 |
| Chillingworth's confidence in reason | 251 |
| His relationship to the Socinian movement | 258 |
| The validity of the anti-Roman arguments | 263 |
| The Bible only | 265 |
| The nature of religious authority | 267 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 270 |
| APPENDIX | 283 |

CHAPTER I

LIFE AND WORK

William Chillingworth was born in St. Martin's Parish, Oxford, in October 1602.¹ He was the son of William Chillingworth, a brewer,² who was afterwards mayor of Oxford. He was baptized the latter part of October.³ The fact that William Laud, then fellow of St. John's College, acted as the godfather indicates that the father was a man of literary and theological interests,⁴ actively involved in the political and ecclesiastical life of the times.

He received his grammar school education under Edward Sylvester, a noted Latinist and Grecian who taught either privately in All Saints Parish or in the free school adjoining Magdalen College.⁵ On June 2, 1618, he was registered as a scholar of Trinity College under the tutelage of Robert Skinner. He received the B.A. degree in 1620, "and going thro' with

¹Anthony Wood, Athenae Oxoniensis, ed. Philip Bliss (London: 1817), III, 87.

²John Aubrey, Aubrey's Brief Lives, ed. Oliver Dick (London: Secker and Warburg, 1949), p. 63.

³Wood, op. cit., p. 87.

⁴M. Creighton, "William Chillingworth," Dictionary of National Biography (London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1887), X, 253.

⁵Wood, op. cit., p. 87.

ease the classes of logic and philosophy, was admitted M. of A. in the latter end of 1623."¹ He was admitted a Fellow of Trinity College June 10, 1628.²

An important factor in Chillingworth's life was the nature of the student life in these years. Causabon, visiting Oxford in 1613, found it "absorbed in controversies over ecclesiastical questions, compared with which all other educational interests, culture or science or classical learning took a secondary place. . . ."³ "The struggle between the two parties in the Church of England had now become the outstanding feature of Oxford life."⁴ It is not surprising, then, to find Chillingworth described as a man who "would often walk in the college grove and contemplate, but when he met with any scholar there, he would enter into discourse, and dispute with him, purposely to facilitate and make the way of wrangling common with him; which was the fashion used in those days, especially among the disputing theologians, or among those that set themselves apart purposely for divinity."⁵

All of this training was to serve Chillingworth

¹Ibid. ²Ibid.

³Charles Mallet, A History of the University of Oxford, (London: Methuen and Company Ltd., 1927), II, 238.

⁴Ibid., p. 237. ⁵Wood, op. cit., p. 87.

later in the controversies with the Church of Rome. He was, however, very sensitive to all that was said, and became, by his own admission, somewhat of a doubter. Later he was to say, "Some Experience makes me fear, that the Faith of considering and discoursing men, is like to be cracked with too much straining. . . ." ¹

However, his studies were not all confined to divinity. "He applied himself, with great success, to Mathematics: and what shows the extent of his genius, he was also accounted a good Poet." ²

On the description of the person of Mr. Chillingworth, Aubrey says that "he was a little man, blackish haire, of a Saturnine complexion." ³ Edward Hyde, later the Earl of Clarendon, who knew Chillingworth at this time, tells of his sensitivity, saying, "He was a Man of excellent Parts, and of a cheerful Disposition; void of all Kind of Vice, and indued with many notable Virtues; of a very publick Heart, and an

¹William Chillingworth, Works, The Religion of Protestants, a Safe Way to Salvation, (tenth edition; London: 1742), p. 59 (1,9).

²P. Des Maizeaux, An Historical and Critical Account of the Life and Writings of William Chillingworth, Chancellor of the Church of Sarum, (London: 1725), p. 2; Francis Cheynell, CHILLINGWORTH NOVISSIMA or, the Sicknesse, Heresy, Death, and Buriall of William Chillingworth, (London: 1644), p. 42, (This pamphlet has no page numbers. The numbering scheme here used is that of Des Maizeaux and begins with the title page as page one.)

³Aubrey, op. cit., p. 63.

indefatigable Desire to do Good; his only Unhappiness proceeded from his sleeping too little, and thinking too much; which sometimes threw him into violent Fevers."¹

Chillingworth's reputation suffered irreparable damage three months after he was made a fellow of Trinity College. The damage resulted from his part in the arrest of Alexander Gill, an usher in St. Paul's School, who was arrested for traducing King James and the Duke of Buckingham. Aubrey says that Chillingworth sent Laud weekly reports of events in the university.² It is well known that Chillingworth was closely associated with Laud and that he was a convinced Royalist and hater of revolution all of his life. This is best seen in his attitude and relation to the Civil War. It must also be remembered that the students in their desire to get ahead were often quite willing to spy and report on one another.³

The outlines of the story as it has been reconstructed are thus: Gill came down to Oxford just after the assassination of the Duke of Buckingham and spent the day, Monday, dawdling and drinking with his friends, one of whom was

¹Edward Hyde, The Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon, (Oxford: the Clarendon Printing-House, 1759) I, 58-59.

²Aubrey, op. cit., p. 63.

³Mallet, op. cit., p. 169, note.

Chillingworth. Gill seems to have made derogatory remarks about the King's fitness to rule. In Aubrey's version, Gill had referred to King James and his son as "the old fool and the young one."¹ Gill evidently enjoyed his position and continued to repeat his story to all who would listen. The only one who remained with him throughout the day was Chillingworth.

On September 4, Gill was taken from his classroom in St. Paul's School, London, and brought before Laud for questioning. Laud then sent a memorandum to the king designating Chillingworth as one of the three most important witnesses. There is also some evidence that Chillingworth went to London in connection with the affair. Aubrey says that Gill was released upon the intercession of Edward, Earl of Dorset, and that the whole affair was soon forgotten.²

This story is typical of the rumors that followed Chillingworth all his life. Aubrey commented that he was "sorry that so great a witt should have been such a naeve,"³ and Masson attributes the event to the political and ecclesiastical notions of Chillingworth at that time.⁴

¹Aubrey, op. cit., p. 63.

²Ibid. ³Ibid.

⁴David Masson, The Life of John Milton: Narrated in Connection with the Political Ecclesiastical, and Literary History of his Time, (London: MacMillan and Company, 1881), I, 212.

The friendship between Laud and Chillingworth was lasting, even though there were striking dissimilarities between them. It remained unbroken despite the fact that Laud was chary of Chillingworth's outspokenness, as is seen in his insistence that Chillingworth's Religion of Protestants be censored strictly before it could be licensed for publication. The friendship lasted in spite of the fact that they were diametrically opposed in their understandings of a comprehensive church. Laud, if he had been infected with the philosophy of Chillingworth, could never have taken the course that he did in attempting to bring unity to the Church of England. For, to Chillingworth, absolute uniformity was the last of good things to be hoped for.¹

At this point in his life, Chillingworth turned to the serious study of theology. To this study he brought one of the keenest disputative wits of his day. His reputation as a debater skilled beyond all of his fellows is the outstanding feature of contemporary reports of his student days. Hyde says that Chillingworth was

a Man of so great Subtilty of Understanding, and so rare a Temper in Debate; that it was impossible to provoke him into any Passion, so it was very difficult to keep a Man's self from being a little discomposed by his Sharpness and Quickness of Argument, and

¹Chillingworth, op. cit., p. 84, (ii, 18); pp. 281-282, (v, 72); pp. 292-293, (v, 96).

Instances, in which He had a rare Faculty, and a great Advantage over all Men I ever knew.¹

This controversial nature was always a part of Chillingworth's make up, and it, in the end, brought about his conversion to the Roman Catholic Church, and then back to Protestantism, and eventually to a skeptical frame of mind.²

During this time the Roman Catholic priests enjoyed much liberty in England. Oxfordshire was itself the home of many recusants and they were rarely molested.³ Trevor-Roper, in his study of Laud, says that, "A single year of James' unilateral toleration gave to Rome 10,000 proselytes, including 200 students from Oxford."⁴ This practice of proselytism had become so notorious that in 1628, Parliament presented a petition to the king asking that the Roman priests be kept out of the country, to prevent them from removing students to the Continent. The King assured them that this would be done, but Parliament complained that the execution was ineffective.⁵ The policy of the Roman Catholic priests was to seek out those who, by reason of doubt or natural inclination to listen to others, were

¹Hyde, op. cit., p. 55.

²Ibid., p. 56.

³W. K. Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936), II, 184.

⁴H. R. Trevor-Roper, Archbishop Laud, 1575-1645, (London: MacMillan and Company, Limited, 1940), p. 184.

⁵Des Maizeaux, op. cit., p. 4.

deemed the easier to convert. Chillingworth was no doubt a very special prize, for "being a pregnant and Ingenious person, many young men of the university began to take up his opinions, and to talk also of going beyond Sea."¹

The man directly responsible for Chillingworth's conversion was a Jesuit priest called John Fisher. This man was also instrumental in converting the Countess of Buckingham and was, moreover, the man with whom Laud had his famous conference in 1622.² Wood says that he was "a learned Jesuit and sophistical disputant, who was often conversant in these parts."³ Chillingworth's meeting with Fisher probably occurred sometime before the year 1630 and, according to Wood, the Jesuit used all means possible to become acquainted with him.⁴ It is not at all likely that this was a spur-of-the-moment decision by Chillingworth who seems not to have been given to the making of any choice except after long deliberation.

Chillingworth was completely convinced at the time that he had done the right thing. Soon after his conversion he wrote to his good friend, Mr. Gilbert Sheldon: "When

¹Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson MS, B. 158, p. 170.

²Des Maizeaux, op. cit., p. 6.

³Wood, op. cit., p. 88.

⁴Ibid.

you have applied your most attentive consideration upon these Questions . . . the Conclusion will be, that you will approve and follow the way wherein I have had the happiness to enter before you; and should think it infinitely increased, if it would please God to draw you after."¹ This letter is an illustration of Chillingworth's extreme self-confidence.

After this conversion to Catholicism, he spent several months in Douay,² probably in the winter of 1630-1631.³ The accounts of his return to the Church of England are not all flattering. Wood, following Aubrey, says it was due to Chillingworth's being given a servile position: ". . . he was not so well entertained as he thought he merited for his great Disputative Witt. They made him the porter (which was to trye his temper, and exercise his obedience) so he stole over and came to Trinity College again, where he was a fellow."⁴

The truth of the matter seems to be contained in the

¹Des Maizeaux, op. cit., p. 8.

²William Laud, The History of the Troubles and Tryal of the Most Reverend Father in God, and Blessed Martyr, William Laud Archbishop of Canterbury, (London: 1693), p. 227; William Chillingworth, Works, Additional Discourses of Mr. Chillingworth, (fifth edition; London: 1742), p. 153.

³Wood, op. cit., p. 89.

⁴Aubrey, op. cit., p. 63.

account by the unknown author, found in the Rawlinson MS., which the catalogue at the Bodleian Library says is in a collection made by a Catholic writer.

Dr. Lawd (Bp. of London) having sent to him by Mr. Skinner (Chillingworth's Tutor.) a copy of the reasons Chillingworth left behind him, communicated them with the whole matter to the King, who presently ordered him to have them very well answered and sent over to Chillingworth the Bp. for his purpose made Choice of Dr. Wedderburne a Scottishman prebendary of Ely, and that time Resident upon and Living he had in Hampshire, who presently upon the Bps. notice came up and recieved the Kgs. Commands to answer that paper &c: which he did in a few daies and the Arch Bsp. sent it over to W^m Chillingworth: who first returned answer, that there was more reason in that answer then ever he had seen for the Protestant Cause, yet that in some things he was still unsatisfied, wherefore after a while he came over and applied himself to Dr. Wedderburne and the Bsp. by whose Command was appointed a Conference betwixt them 2: the onely Speakers (the none prohibited to be present) at W^c Badger the Printers house in Stationers hall the conference lasted six weeks. 3. daies in a weeke and the Result was that Chillingworth: was reduced Publickly acknowledged his Error, rendering thank's to God upon his knees for the discovery thereof, as also did Dr. Hart, who had been present all the while at the Chapel of London house--the papers¹ of this conference are in Dr. Coles hands as he saith.

Clarendon agrees with this writer on the public nature of Chillingworth's confession of his errors.²

Archbishop Laud at his trial listed Chillingworth among eighteen men whom he had personally helped to redeem

¹Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson MS, B. 158, pp. 170-171.

²Hyde, op. cit., p. 57.

from the Roman Church. The fifteenth person in his list is Chillingworth of whom he records:

Mr. Chillingworth's Learning and Abilities are sufficiently known to all your Lordships. He was gone, and settled at Dowaye. My Letters brought him back; and he Lived and Dyed a Defender of the Church of England. And that this is so, your Lordships cannot but know; for Mr. Pryn took away my Letters, and all the Papers which concerned him, and they were Examined at the Committee.¹

Henry Wharton, who edited The History of the Trouble and Tryals of William Laud, could find no trace of these papers. He believed that these papers were purposely destroyed by Prynne so that they could never serve in the defense of Laud in any form, either before or after his death.²

Chillingworth's return to the Church of England was slower than his conversion to Rome, and it demonstrates the great integrity and independent character of his mind. Chillingworth did not return from the Roman Catholic Church as a convinced Protestant, but only as a convinced skeptic. For several years he made his own independent study into religion,³ and his major work, The Religion of Protestants: a safeway to Salvation, is the denouement of his reconversion. Tulloch says that

It was a luckless step in Chillingworth's case sending him to a Jesuit seminary. Close contact with the system

¹Laud, op. cit., p. 227.

²Ibid., preface.

³Des Maizeaux, op. cit., p. 13.

which he had embraced was all that was needed to arouse the higher susceptibilities of a mind like his But a mind so truth-loving, candid, and keen-sighted, could not halt in the investigation on which it had entered. He was especially ill-fitted to fall in with the routine of a "seminary", and the dialectic and practical studies by which Jesuitism sought to confirm converts and bring them under full discipline of their faith. Never was a man less fitted to become a Jesuit priest, and give up his mind to the service of others.¹

Clarendon says that he carried his "own Inquisitiveness about him, without any Resignation to their Authority (which is the only Temper can make that Church sure of its Proselytes)" ²

Chillingworth himself says: "The Roman Religion is much more exorbitant in the general Practice of it, than it is in the Doctrine published in Books of Controversy; where it is delivered with much Caution and Moderation, nay Cunning and Dissimulation, that it may be the fitter to win and engage Proselytes" ³ The Roman Church, he testified, kept their "Proselytes from an indifferent Trial of . . . Religion" ⁴

In The Religion of Protestants Chillingworth summed up his own changes of religion:

¹John Tulloch, Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1872), I, 272-273.

²Hyde, op. cit., p. 56.

³Chillingworth, Additional Discourses, p. 153.

⁴Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 79, (ii, 3).

But, Sir, if this be a strange Matter to you, that which I shall tell you will be much stranger: I know a Man that of a moderate Protestant turned a Papist, and the Day that he did so, (as all Things that are done are perfected some Day or other) was convicted in Conscience, that his Yesterday's Opinion was an Error, and yet thinks he was no Schismatick for doing so, and desires to be informed by you, whether or no he was mistaken? The same Man afterwards, upon better Consideration, became a doubting Papist, and of a doubting Papist a confirmed Protestant. And yet this Man thinks himself no more to blame for all these Changes, than a Traveller, who using all Diligence to find the right Way to some remote City, where he had never been, (as the Party I speak of had never been in Heaven) did yet mistake it, and after find his Error, and amend it. Nay, he stands upon his Justification so far, as to maintain, that his Alterations, not only to you, but also from you by God's Mercy, were the most satisfactory Actions to himself that ever he did, and the greatest Victories that ever he obtained over himself, and his Affections to those Things which in this World are most precious; as wherein, for God's sake, and (as he was verily persuaded) out of Love to the Truth, he went, upon a certain Expectation of those Inconveniencies, which to ingenuous Natures are of all most terrible: So that though there were much Weakness in some of these Alterations, yet certainly there was no Wickedness. Neither does he yield his Weakness altogether without Apology, seeing his Deductions were rational, and out of some Principles commonly recieved by Protestants as well as Papists, and which by his Education had got Possession of his Understanding.¹

Chillingworth was looking for an absolute authority, but his return indicates that he did not find it in the Roman Church. Logical consistency with Laudian principles led him to Rome,² but he led himself back, as Clarendon remarks:

¹Ibid., p. 297, (v, 103).

²Masson, op. cit., p. 538.

All his Doubts grew out of himself, when He assisted his Scruples with all the Strength of his own Reason, and was too hard for himself; but finding as little Quiet and Repose in those Victories, He quickly recovered by a new Appeal to his own Judgement; so that He was in Truth, upon the Matter, in all his Sallies, and Retreats, his own Convert:¹

Tulloch says that "The same deep sincerity and sleepless search after truth, animate and guide him throughout."²

Several times Chillingworth himself indicated that he was searching for the "true Way to eternal Happiness"³

Whether this Way lie on the right Hand, or the left, or straight forward; whether it be by following a living Guide, or by seeking my Direction in a Book, or by heark'ning to the secret Whisper of some private Spirit, to me it is indifferent. And he that is otherwise affected, and hath not a Traveller's Indifference, which Epictetus requires in all that would find the Truth, but much desires, in respect of his Ease, or Pleasure, or Profit, or Advancement, or Satisfaction of Friends, or any Human Consideration, that one Way should be true rather than another; it is odds but he will take his Desire that it should be so, for an Assurance that it is so.⁴

This way is both the golden mean and the narrow way; it is the only way that leads to life and few succeed in finding it.⁵
This philosophy guided him in his attempt to find a firm rock

¹Hyde, op. cit., p. 57.

²Tulloch, op. cit., p. 305.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 354, (vi, 56).

⁴Ibid., pp. 9-10, (preface, 2).

⁵Ibid., pp. 174-175 (iii, 63).

in a time of change.

It is this devotion to the truth which Chillingworth demonstrates in all of his motives, both in going to Rome and returning. Clarendon calls it "a too nice Inquisition for Truth"; neither the persons nor the books of the adversary ever made any impression on him.¹

Chillingworth was led to Rome by what he then thought must be the consistent goodness of God. That is that God, being God, must have an absolutely infallible church, and this could only be the Church of Rome.² He never gave up his desire for an infallible church but he could not find any rational justification for such a church.³ "Is it a Crime," he wrote to his Roman friend Lewger, "with all my Understanding to endeavour to find your Religion true, and to make myself a Believer of it, and not be able to do so? Is it a Crime to imploy all my Reason upon the Justification of the Infallibility of the Roman Church; and find it impossible to be justified?"⁴

¹Hyde, op. cit., p. 56.

²Des Maizeaux, op. cit., p. 8; Chillingworth, Additional Discourses, pp. 180-182; Religion of Protestants, pp. 24-25, (preface, 43).

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 177, (iii, 69); Additional Discourses, p. 142.

⁴Chillingworth, Works, Reasons against Popery, (London: 1742), p. 391.

The important question here is, how did he come to this denial of his own affirmation of the Roman position so soon after he had made it? Of primary importance is his statement that he was led to doubt the absolute infallibility of Rome "by Dr. Stapleton, and others, who limit the Church's Freedom from Error to Things necessary only. . . ."¹ He concluded from this that Protestants and Romans do not differ in any fundamental points. This conclusion may have come to him while he was at Douay, or, it may be, as he intimates, as a result of reading Potter's book² where this point is made several times.³ It was then the doctrines of some Romans that engendered the doubts that led him back to the Church of England.

Having thus freed himself from "this wretched Fallacy"⁴ and the "miserable delusions"⁵ concerning the unique nature of the Church of Rome, he turned to the attempt to make a

¹Chillingworth, Additional Discourses, p. 180.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, Epistle Dedicatory.

³Christopher Potter, Want of Charity Justly Charged, on all Such Romanists, As dare (without truth or modesty) affirme, that Protestancy Destroyeth Salvation, (Oxford: 1633) part I, 39, part II, 16.

⁴Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 267, (v, 27).

⁵Ibid., p. 268, (v, 27).

totally rational examination of the Roman claims. He was not permitted to make this investigation from within the Roman church:

It is a pretty thing to consider how these Men can blow hot and cold out of the same Mouth so serve several Purposes. Is there Hope of gaining a Proselyte? Then they will tell you, God hath given every Man Reason to follow; . . . That every Man hath a Judgment of Discretion; which if they will make us of, they shall easily find, that the true Church hath always such and such Marks, and that their Church hath them, and no others but theirs. But then if any of theirs be persuaded to a sincere and sufficient Trial of their Church, even by their own Notes of it, and to try whether they be indeed so conformable to Antiquity as they pretend, then their Note is changed. You must not use your own Reason, nor your Judgment, but refer all to the Church, and believe her to be conformable to Antiquity, though they have no Reason for it, nay, though they have evident Reason to the contrary.¹

He could not in any case suspend reason when there were arguments of importance to be weighed in the balance.²

However, Chillingworth's statement that he could not suspend his judgment when he saw reason did not mean that he returned to England with a closed mind. He proclaimed his personal indebtedness to many men in the Roman Church, and declared that in their death a part of him would be lost also.³ He attempted to weigh the reasons for and against

¹Ibid., p. 112, (ii, 113).

²Chillingworth, Reasons against Popery, p. 392.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 57, (i, 5).

the Roman religion "with such Indifference, as if there were nothing in the World but God and myself . . ."¹ He remained ready to declare the truth as he saw it, regardless of the side that it happened to be on.² In fact, he seems to have declared his scruples too freely, so that a report was later circulated that he became a Roman Catholic for the second time and that he again returned to the Protestant fold.³

In an age requiring dogmatic belief and assuredness, it is not strange that this and other charges should follow Chillingworth throughout his lifetime. It was charged that he had left Rome in order to gain a high position for himself in the Church of England. Coupled with this is the charge that he left Rome for no religion at all. These Chillingworth regarded as slanders calculated to ruin the circulation of his book. His reply to the charge of Socinianism reveals the courage with which he faced these charges.

Again, how incredible is it, that you should believe that I forsook the Profession of your Religion, as not suiting with my Desires and Designs, which yet reconciles the injoying of the pleasures and profits of Sin here, with the hope of Happiness hereafter, and proposes as great hope of temporal Advancements to the capable Servants of it, as any, nay more than any

¹Chillingworth, Reasons against Popery, p. 392.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, pp. 9-10, (preface 2); Reasons against Popery, p. 392; Additional Discourses, p. 133.

³Des Maizeaux, op. cit., p. 18.

Religion in the world; and instead of this should chuse Socinianism, a doctrine, which howsoever erroneous in explicating the Mysteries of Religion, and allowing greater liberty of Opinion in speculative matters, than any other company of Christians doth, or they should do; yet certainly which you, I am sure, will pretend and maintain to explicate the Laws of Christ with more rigour, and less indulgence and condescendence to the desires of the Flesh and Blood than your doctrine doth: And, besides, such a doctrine, by which no Man in his right mind, can hope for any Honour and Preferment, either in this Church or State, or any other.¹

This willingness to see good in the doctrines, or, rather in the life of the Socinians, laid him wide open to the charge of being a Socinian, a charge leveled at him by Puritans as well as Romans.

Edward Hyde, the Earl of Clarendon, makes the following pregnant suggestion concerning the effect of Chillingworth's Roman interlude. Chillingworth returned from the Roman church

with a Belief that an entire Exemption from Error, was neither inherent in, nor necessary to any Church; which occassioned that War, which was carried on by the Jesuits with so great Asperity, and Reproaches against him and in which He defended himself, by such an admirable Eloquence of Language, and clear, and incomparable Power of Reason, that he not only made them appear unequal Adversaries, but carried the War into their own Quarters;²

The reference here is to Chillingworth's great work, The Religion of Protestants: a safeway to Salvation. This

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 21, (preface, 29).

²Hyde, op. cit., p. 56.

controversial volume was Chillingworth's full answer to those arguments that had persuaded him to go to Rome.¹

In order to make his answer to Rome logically sound, Chillingworth went to the country home of his friend, Lord Falkland, at Great Tew, about twelve miles from Oxford. Aubrey gives the following description of the life and men there.

His Lordship was acquainted with the best Wits of that University, and his House was like a Colledge, full of Learned men. Mr. William Chillingworth, of Trinity College in Oxford . . . was his most intimate and beloved favourite, and was commonly with my Lord. His Chaplain, Charles Gataker, was an ingeniose young Gentleman, but no Writer. For learned Gentlemen of the Country, his acquaintance was Mr. Sandys, the Traveller and Translator; Ben Johnson; Edmund Waller, Esq.; Mr. Thomas Hobbes, and all the excellent of that peaceable time.²

This description of the men who frequented Great Tew is confirmed by the antiquarian poem of Sir John Suckling, "A Session of the Poets," in which Chillingworth is included among the poets who gathered there.³

Dr. Thomas Barlow suggests that The Religion of Protestants was the result of a collaboration between

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 24, (preface, 42).

²Aubrey, op. cit., p. 56.

³Sir John Suckling, The Works of Sir John Suckling in Prose and Verse, ed. A. Hamilton Thompson, (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1910), p. 9.

Chillingworth and Falkland:

Another thing concerning that very ingenious and Learned Lord (and very well known to me and many others) was this; When Mr. Chillingworth undertook the Defence of Dr. Potter's Book against the Jesuits, he was almost continually at Tew with my Lord, examining the Reasons of both Parties, pro and con, and their invalidity or consequence, where Mr. Chillingworth had the benefit of My Lord's Company, and rational Discourse, was very great, as Mr. Chillingworth would modestly and truly confess. But his Library, which was well furnished with choice Books (I have several times been in it, and seen them) such as Mr. Chillingworth neither had, nor ever heard of the, 'till my Lord shewed him the Books and the passages in them, which were significant and pertinent to the purpose. So that it is certain that most of those Ancient Authorities which Mr. Chillingworth makes use of, he owes first to my Lord of Falkland's Learning, that he could give him so good directions; and next to his civility and kindness, that he would direct him.¹

The other person to whom Chillingworth owes a large personal debt in the writing of his great book is John Hales, who also frequented Falkland's home at Great Tew. Hales was of a very gentle spirit and free from all sectarian prejudice.² He was a student of Greek and a good preacher. As a young man he had attended the Synod of Dort which seems to have had a marked effect on his attitude toward other churches and systems of theology. That he made a direct contribution to Chillingworth's work is acknowledged by many who assume that

¹ Thomas Barlow, The Genuine Remains of That Learned Prelate Dr. Thomas Barlow Late Lord Bishop of Lincoln, (London: 1693), p. 329.

² Alexander Gordon, "John Hales," Dictionary of National Biography (London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1890), XXIV, 30.

his ironical work, the Tract on Schism and Schismatics, was probably written as a letter to Chillingworth who was in the process of writing The Religion of Protestants.¹ Hales, being many years the senior, was apt to be a steadying influence when Chillingworth's individualism carried him to conclusions that he could not in the end maintain.

Thus "Great Tew became in the heated controversial atmosphere of English religious life a mountain peak of objectivity from which the religious scene was viewed and analysed with rare dispassion and tolerance of spirit."² It hardly seems possible that Chillingworth's book could have been written in any other atmosphere. He, himself, testifies in the preface that "I have not only my self examin'd mine own Work . . . but have also made it pass the fiery Trial of the exact Censures of many understanding Judges"³

Exactly what possessed Chillingworth to write his Religion of Protestants cannot be determined. In the Epistle Dedicatory to King Charles the I, he gives the following reason for its publication, "Having with the greatest Equality and Indifferency, made inquiry and search into the Grounds of both Sides, I was willing to impart to others, that Satis-

¹Ibid.

²Jordan, op. cit., p. 371.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, pp. 10-11, (preface, 4).

faction which was given to my self."¹ Likewise he indicates that he had a very personal stake in the defence of Dr. Potter:

For my Inscribing to it Your Majesty's Sacred Name, I should labour much in my Excuse of it from high Presumption, had it not some Appearance of Title to Your Majesty's Patronage and Protection, as being a Defence of that Book, which by special Order from Your Majesty was written some Years since, chiefly for the general Good, but peradventure not without some Aim at the Recovery of one of your meanest Subjects from a dangerous Deviation²

The controversy began in 1630 when a Jesuit, who went by the name of Edward Knott, but whose real name was Matthias Wilson, formerly a professor of divinity in the English College at Rome and then successively Vice Provincial and then Provincial of all English Jesuits,³ wrote a book entitled Charity mistaken, with the want whereof, Catholickes are unjustly charged: for affirming, as they do with grief, that Protestantcy unrepented destroyes Salvation. This book was answered by Dr. Christopher Potter, Provost of Queen's College, Oxford, with a book entitled Want of Charitied justly charged on all such Romanists, as dare (without truth or modesty) affirme, that Protestancie destroyeth Salvation. In Answer to a late Popish Pamphlet intituled Charity Mistaken &c., which

¹ Ibid., Epistle Dedicatory.

² Ibid.; cf. ibid., pp. 39-40, (Answer to Preface, 12).

³ Des Maizeaux, op. cit., p. 44.

appeared in 1633. This book was in turn answered by Knott with a book entitled Mercy and Truth. Or Charity maintayned by Catholiques. By way of Reply upon an Answere lately framed by D. Potter to a Treatise which had formerly proved, That Charity was Mistaken by Protestants: With the want whereof Catholiques are unjustly charged, for affirming, That Protestancy unrepented destroyes Salvation. Diuided into two Parts. This last work, which appeared in 1634, was the book which Chillingworth undertook to answer.

He was at work on this answer through the years 1635 and 1636.¹ This work was not without its difficulties in the form of harassment by those who were openly hostile to him as well as from within the Church of England by those who resented his outspokenness.

The first difficulty was a libel directed at him by Knott who, hearing that Chillingworth was going to answer his book Mercy and Truth, wrote A Direction to be observed by N. N. if hee meane to proceed in Answering the Booke intituled, Mercy and Truth, or Charity Maintained by Catholicks &c. This was a short work of only forty-two pages and appeared in print in 1636. In it Knott attempted to prejudice the public against the work of Chillingworth by calling him the most odious name he could think of: Socinian.² In it he also

¹Ibid., p. 43.

²Ibid., pp. 105-106.

listed rules which he demanded that Chillingworth follow if he were to give a valid answer to his book. Knowing that The Religion of Protestants was already well under way, he thought that these conditions could not be fulfilled.

The second difficulty, from within the Church of England, came at the instigation of Archbishop Laud himself. Although the book was nearly finished by the beginning of 1637 Laud meant to see that the book was censured before it was licensed for the press. Laud stated his concern in a letter to Dr. Prideaux:

You know, that Mr. Chillingworth is answering of a Book, that much concerns the Church of England; and I am very sorry that the young Man hath given cause, why a more watch-ful eye should be held over him and his Writings. But since it is so, I would willingly desire this favour from you in the Church's Name, that you would be at the Pains to read over this Tract, and see that it be put home in all Points against the Church of Rome, as the cause requires. And I am confident Mr. Chillingworth will not be against your altering of any thing that shall be found reasonable.¹

In addition to Dr. Prideaux, Dr. Baylie, Vice Chancellor of the University, and Dr. Fell, Lady Margaret's Professor in Divinity, were called upon to aid in the censoring of the book.²

There is a report that Prideaux later castigated the book despite the fact that his name was affixed to the beginning. It may have been that his Calvinistic tendencies

¹Ibid., pp., 137-138.

²Ibid., p. 138.

would not let him approve whole heartedly of the book but Wood has cited the story from Cheynell who openly admitted his hate of Chillingworth.¹

The importance with which the book was regarded by the Roman Catholics is shown by the fact that Knott purchased the finished sheets as they came from the press for five shillings each. Chillingworth testifies that he knew this from some Catholics in Oxford.² This leakage from the licensed press was a sore trial to Laud. He wrote to the Vice Chancellor asking him to investigate the charge. If Knott was able to make too speedy an answer, the printer was to lose his commission. The Vice Chancellor was also admonished to apprehend Knott, or his agents.³

When the imprint of the book was well underway, Chillingworth told Dr. Baylie of his reasons for not answering the second part of Mr. Knott's book; an action which he says he took upon the advice of his friends.⁴ These reasons were then put into writing and sent to the Archbishop. Laud then wrote to Baylie expressing the fear that all men would

¹Ibid., pp. 146-147.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 11, (preface, 4).

³Des Maizeaux, op. cit., pp. 138-139.

⁴Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 10, (preface, 3).

not understand that Chillingworth had answered the whole in answering the first part. Since Chillingworth had made it plain to him that an answer to the second part could not be accomplished for some time, Laud agreed that they might go ahead with the publication with the following stipulations. First, that he print at the end his reasons for not answering the second part. Secondly, in the answer to the first part he was to draw attention to the pages in the second part of Knott's book which he had answered. And lastly, that he should acquaint Dr. Potter with his plan so that no misunderstandings would arise between them.¹

The first stipulation was carried out in the Conclusion of the book, but the second was not carried out at all, as it was now much too late, the book being almost through the printers by this time. There is no record of any trouble between Chillingworth and Dr. Potter, so it must be presumed that the last was agreed between them.

The book was published toward the end of the year 1637,² with the following title: The Religion of Protestants, a safe way to Salvation: Or an Answer to a Booke entitled, Mercy and Truth, or Charity maintained by Catholiques, Which pretends to prove the contrary. By William Chillingworth

¹Des Maizeaux, op. cit., pp. 139-141.

²Ibid., pp. 141, 220-222.

Master of Arts of the University of Oxford.

The attempt to prejudice the public was a decided failure, and Chillingworth's book achieved an almost immediate popularity. There was a second edition very early in 1638. The imprimatur of the second edition is dated at London, February 6, 1637/38 and is signed by Samuel Baker. This is regarded as an extremely good sale for a book of controversy in folio which ran to almost 300 pages.¹

The format of The Religion of Protestants is singular. Chillingworth, in his scrupulous desire to deal fairly with his opponent, has printed each chapter of Knott's book immediately preceding the answer, and so clearing himself of the charge of misrepresentation. Thus, Chillingworth's book is divided into seven chapters as was the Jesuit's. There is also an answer to the preface of Knott's book to make the whole design complete.

Chillingworth's general purpose is to vindicate all Protestants from the charges of the Roman Catholics.² In the course of this he is forced to defend the divines of the Church of England in general, and Dr. Potter in particular,³

¹Ibid., p. 222.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 23, (preface, 40).

³Ibid., p. 17, (preface, 19).

and to defend his own name from the charges that have been made against him.¹

Sometime during the writing of The Religion of Protestants, Chillingworth resolved the problem of his relationship to the Church of England.

As early as 1635 Chillingworth had been asked by the Lord Keeper, Coventry, to accept some preferment in the Church of England. He replied in a letter to "the right worshipful and his much honored friend Dr. Sheldon," the Lord Keeper's domestic Chaplain.² This letter is dated from Tew, September, 1635. He explains that preferment was appealing to him on account of his debt to his father and because he was in "danger of falling into chronicall infirmitie of my body."³ In spite of this he says: "I do here send you news, as unto my best friend, of a great and happy victory, which at length with extream difficultie I have scarcely obtained over the onely enemie that can hurt me, that is, my selfe."⁴

Although Chillingworth also worried that his private refusal to accept preferment might endanger the chances of some of his friends, he refused to accept an official position. His personal appeal was made on the grounds of conscience:

¹Ibid., pp. 20-22, (preface, 28-30); p. 23-24, (preface, 39-40).

²Des Maizeaux, op. cit., pp. 86-98.

³Ibid., p. 86.

⁴Ibid.

Though conscience of my own good intention and desire, suggests unto me many flattering hopes of great possibilitie of doing God and his Church service, if I had that preferment which I may fairly hope for; though I may justly fear, that by refusing those preferments which I sought for, I shall gain the reputation of weaknesse and levity, and incur their displeasure, whose good opinion of me, next to God's favour, and my own good opinion of my self, I do esteem and desire above all things¹

Chillingworth was afraid that in signing the Articles he would lose that little assurance of the love of God which he now had. This assurance of the love of God was a matter of deep concern to him: "But if I once lose this; though all the world should conspire to make me happy, I shall and must be extremely miserable."²

He did not say that other men should not subscribe to the Articles, but only that he could not, and be true to his own conscience, for he was

very well perswaded of you and my other friends, who do so with a full perswasion that you may do it lawfully; yet the case stands so with me, and I can see no remedy but for ever it will do so, that if I subscribe, I subscribe my own Damnation . . . I plainly see if I will not juggle with my Conscience, and play with God almighty, I must forbear.³

In fact Chillingworth seems, twice, in the letter to indicate that he should gain preferment without subscription. In the first instance he says: "For though I do verily

¹Ibid., p. 87.

²Ibid., p. 88.

³Ibid., pp. 88-89.

believe the Church of England a true member of the Church; that she wants nothing necessary to Salvation, and holds nothing repugnant to it; and had thought that to think so, had sufficiently qualified me for a Subscription"¹

And secondly, he asks Sheldon to help him:

I shall not need to intreat you, not to be offended with mee for this my most honest, and (as I verily believe) most wise Resolution: hoping rather, you will do your endeavour, that I may neither be honest at so dear a rate, as the losse of preferment, nor buy preferment at so much dearer a rate, the losse of honesty.²

However, this path was excluded by the form of subscription required by Convocation from 1604 onwards.

This letter shows that the real objections of Chillingworth turned on the form of the subscription. The legal form of the subscription would have required him to give his assent to the articles in a manner that he could not do with a good conscience:

For, to say nothing of other things, which I have so well consider'd as not to be in state to sign them, and yet not so well as to declare my self against them; two points there are, wherein I am fully resolved, and therefore care not who knows my mind.³

The first objection was to the fourth commandment. To say that this commandment relates to the Christian celebration of the Sabbath is "false and unlawful."⁴ This was

¹Ibid., p. 88.

²Ibid., p. 96.

³Ibid., pp. 90-91.

⁴Ibid., pp. 91-92.

part of his more general rejection of the Ten Commandments because they require only external obedience, as the laws of other kingdoms, and do not reach the conscience.¹ The second objection was to the use of the Athanasian Creed, as it is directed both in the Thirty-nine Articles, article VIII, and in the Book of Common Prayer. It was the damnatory sentences in the creed to which he objected, because they "are most false, and also in a high degree presumptuous and schismaticall."²

Of these two things Chillingworth says: "Therefore I can neither subscribe that these things are agreeable to the word of God, seeing I believe they are certainly repugnant to it: not that the whole Common Prayer is lawful to be used, seeing I believe these parts of it certainly unlawfull; nor promise that I My self will use it, seeing I never intend either to read these things which I have now excepted against, or to say Amen to them."³

The other correspondence on this matter has been lost, but in Des Maizeaux is printed a transcript of the heads of arguments by Sheldon. These seem to be an answer

¹William Chillingworth, Works, Sermons, (ninth edition; London: 1742), p. 95, (VIII, 9).

²Des Maizeaux, op. cit., pp. 92-93.

³Ibid., pp. 93-95.

to another letter on the subject and indicate that some of this correspondence was carried on in the third person for greater secrecy.¹ From this it is seen that he had further objections to Articles XIII, XIV, XX, and XXXI, and to the Thirty-nine Articles in general, as an imposition upon the consciences of men. But from these answers the exact nature of the full objections cannot be known.

There is, however, another source of Chillingworth's objections to the Articles that was not known to Des Maizeaux. These are contained in a manuscript, in Chillingworth's own handwriting, found in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.² There are here comments on twenty-two of the Articles, written in Latin. These may well be the thoughts which Chillingworth mentions he has considered but has not set down for all to see.³

Of greater importance are the actual conditions which Chillingworth did finally lay down when he intimated that he was ready to sign the Articles and accept preferment. He indicated his willingness to subscribe in answer to the charges made against him by the Jesuit, Knott. However, in declaring his willingness to subscribe, he also declared the

¹Ibid., pp. 103-104.

²Bodleian Library, Tanner MSS, 233, pp. 6-29.

³Des Maizeaux, op. cit., pp. 90-91.

meaning, for him, of such an assent:

For the Church of England, I am persuaded, that the constant Doctrine of it is so pure and orthodox, that whosoever believes it, and lives according to it, undoubtedly he shall be saved; and that there is no Error in it, which may necessitate or warrant any Man to disturb the Peace, or renounce the Communion of it. This in my opinion is all intended by Subscription; and thus much, if you conceive me not ready to subscribe, your Charity I assure you is much mistaken.¹

In July of 1638, the opportunity to test the word of Chillingworth was at hand. Dr. Brian Duppa had been moved from the Chancellorship of Sarum to be Bishop of Chichester and Chillingworth was appointed to this vacancy. This was a big step for one who had never held an ecclesiastical post previously, and Des Maizeaux seems to think that both the King and Laud had read the book and heartily approved.² On the twentieth of July he subscribed to the Articles in the Cathedral at Salisbury.

Chillingworth's letter to Sheldon was circulated generally and was the source of rumors that he gained a preferment without subscription, or, that he did not subscribe in the legal form.³ However, from the transcript of his subscription, which is contained in Des Maizeaux, it

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 24, (preface, 40).

²Des Maizeaux, op. cit., p. 265.

³Ibid., p. 267.

is seen that he did actually subscribe in the form which was usual for the time.¹

Chillingworth's reluctance to subscribe and his expression of the meaning of subscription assumed a greatly exaggerated importance in the period following the restoration and the early eighteenth century. William Lacey, a Jesuit, in his book, Judgement of a University Man, published in 1639, says that "The scruple he had concerning subscription is vanish'd into the aire, whither the rest of his scruples will follow in their turnes."² Others saw it differently. Hugh Cressy, an Anglican turned Roman Catholic, viewed it as a new thing in the Church of England:

[Chillingworth,] by his sharpe understanding, and long meditation . . . considering that no Protestant or other Church could upon their generally acknowledged groundes authoritatively define either the number or sense of Articles of Faith, so as to oblige any man, even within her Communion, in conscience to assent He therefore was forced to introduce two Novelties among English Protestants, which find great approbation: the first is to alter the old manner and notion of subscription of the English Articles;³

However, it is seen that he did not alter the manner of sub-

¹Ibid.

²William Lacey, The Judgement of a University Man Concerning William Chillingworth his Late Pamphlet, in Answer to Carity Maintayned, (1639), p. 156.

³Hugh Cressy, Exomologesis: or, A Faithful Narration of the Occassion and Motives of the Conversion unto Catholike Unity of Hugh-Paulin De Cressy, (second edition; Paris: 1653), pp. 296-297.

scription, but there is some testimony among English Protestants of the Restoration that he did alter the notion of subscription. Chillingworth's argument was taken up by the Non-Conformists as a defense of their own position. Woodhead, in An humble Apology for Non-Conformists &c., published in 1669, infers in the preface that signing in this sense ought to acquit non-conformists of any charges of schism.¹ This was also the opinion of Calamy when he says that Chillingworth seemed, to him, to counsel moderate non-conformity.²

Indeed, Chillingworth's subscription served a utilitarian purpose for the later publication of his book. The editor of the tenth edition has seen fit to reproduce from the ninth edition the preface which states that the subscription "is an abundant Evidence that, upon Motives of Conscience only, he joined as heartily with our Church in disowning the Unitarian Principles, as in condemning the Errors of the Church of Rome."³

With the publication of The Religion of Protestants, Chillingworth's life took on the character of constant

¹Des Maizeaux, op. cit., pp. 167-168, citing Abraham Woodhead, An Humble Apology for Non-Conformists, (1669), Preface.

²Edmund Calamy, An Historical Account of My Own Life, with Some Reflections on the Times I Have Lived in, (second edition; London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bently, 1830), I, 234.

³Chillingworth, Works, (London: 1742), editor's preface.

controversy with the Church of Rome. The bulk of what are termed his "Additional Discourses" deal with specific points that were raised in The Religion of Protestants. A number of these works were disputes with particular men over particular issues which Chillingworth, or some other person, has transcribed just as they occurred, in order to see the progress of the argument and the pertinence² of the logical points raised. That Chillingworth was sought out by others is confirmed by Lord George Digby, who refers to a conference between Chillingworth and Mr. White, held at the Lord Digby's request in the home of Sir Kenelm Digby.¹ This meeting culminated in Chillingworth's paper, "An Answer to some Passages in Rushworth's Dialogues", which is printed with the Additional Discourses. This may well have been the pattern which produced most of his other works. X

One of these controversial pieces serves particularly to bring out the character of Chillingworth in its best light. This is his relationship with John Lewgar, a man of the same age as Chillingworth, who became an Anglican priest in Essex, but later left the Church of England for the Roman Catholic Church, perhaps as a result of his friendship with Chillingworth.² There were several conferences between these two

¹Des Maizeaux, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

²Wood, op. cit., p. 697.

after Chillingworth had returned from Douay. Wood says that he induced Lewgar by the force of his arguments to believe that the Church of Rome was the true Church.¹ However, this does not fit well with Chillingworth's unsettled state in this period. Wood also seems not to take any account of the papers which passed between the two, particularly the "Reasons Against Popery in a Letter to Mr. Lewgar", in which Chillingworth replies to the coldness of Lewgar but gives no hint of replying to the charge of having seduced him from the Church of England.

Chillingworth tells him at the outset that

I cannot deny, but the Loss of a Friend goes very near to my Heart; and by this Name of a Friend, I did presume, till of late, that I might have called you, because, though perhaps for want of Power and Opportunity I have done you no good Office, yet I have always been willing and ready to do you the best Service I could; and therefore I cannot but admire at your affected Strangeness, which in your last Letter to me you seem to take upon you; renouncing in a manner all Relation to me, and tacitly excommunicating me from all Interest in you . . . I hope Christians are not forbidden to shew Humanity and Civility even to Pagans.²

He then goes on to ask how he can be charged with a crime in the matter of his religion in the following words:

Is it a Crime to imploy all my Reason upon the Justification of the Infallibility of the Roman Church; and to find it impossible to be justified? I will call God to witness, who knows my Heart better than you do, that I have evened

¹Ibid.

²Chillingworth, Reasons against Popery, p. 391.

the Scale of my Judgement as much as possibly I could, and have not willingly allowed one Grain of worldly Motives on either Side, but have weighed the Reasons for your Religion, and against it, with such Indifference, as if there were nothing in the World but God and myself; and is it my Fault, that the Scale goes down, which hath the most Weight in it?¹

In fact this would seem to preclude the charge that Chillingworth had led him away from the Church of England, and the rest of the letter is devoted to destroying the notion of Roman infallibility as an adequate basis for faith.

Chillingworth, in a sermon on Luke 19: 8, decries the fact that in this time controversies have been turned into private quarrels, and that "it is not so much the Truth that is sought after, as the salving and curing the Reputation of particular Men."² This must have been a cry from the heart, for Chillingworth himself suffered more than most in this respect.

The record of Chillingworth's activities in this period after subscription is not at all complete. Indeed, nothing is known of his activities in Salisbury or his other charges, the Prebend of Brixworth, or the Mastership of Wigstan's Hospital in Leicester. It is known that he retained these preferments till his death, but in what manner he discharged his responsibility is not known.

¹Ibid., pp. 391-392.

²Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 83, (VII, 8).

Chillingworth's sermons do not provide any clue, for they seem to have been preached at several places, and those preserved are those delivered upon eminent occasions or feast days of the Church. In the sermons, the mood of the Hebrew prophet predominates. The very first sermon, in the order in which they are commonly printed, sets the tone of those which are to follow. The text is II Timothy 3: 1-5, and the emphasis is on the final clause: "having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power thereof." This sermon, preached before the King, Charles I, at the outset of the war, seeks to show "that the Spirit and Soul, and Life of Religion, is for the most part gone; only the outward Body or Carcase, or rather the Picture or Shadow of it, being left behind . . ."¹

The sermons express Chillingworth's understanding that every doctrine carries with it some necessary action on the part of man.² Thus each sermon is aimed at obedience to God and his commands in Jesus Christ. In a particularly poignant passage in the sixth sermon on Luke 16: 9, he takes doctrine right to the heart of one of the serious problems of his day, that of duelling, with an irony that shows it to be an untenable practice.³ He treats the social ills of his

¹Ibid., p. 1, (I).

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, pp. 299-300, (v, 106).

³Chillingworth, Sermons, pp. 77-78, (VI, 34, 35).

day as the negation of the obedience required by the New Covenant.

The rapidly developing political situation was bringing a new period in the life of England and Chillingworth was involved in it with all of his power. In a letter to an unknown individual, written as the events are developing, he explains that "all are equally bound to Discharge their Duty to God: All have equally a pt. in their Prince's and their country welfare"¹ This is the view that he held when the Chapter at Salisbury elected him to be their Proctor in the Convocation which met with the Short Parliament of April, 1640.² However, there is no record of his activities while a member of this group.

Whether or not this step with the Convocation forced him into a closer association with the Royalist cause, as Tulloch affirms,³ cannot be certainly known. However, in recent studies, a new phase of Chillingworth's life has come into focus. In 1641 he was a member of the "Long Parliament", which, with the passing and signing of the bill of attainder against Strafford and its refusal to be dissolved without its own consent, had come completely under the sway

¹Lambeth Palace Library, Lambeth MS 943, p. 899.

²Des Maizeaux, op. cit., pp. 267-268.

³Tulloch, op. cit., p. 293.

of the Puritan grouping. Since Chillingworth had no essential sympathy with this group he was not long in getting into trouble through his outspokenness and, perhaps, through his friendship with Archbishop Laud, who had been sent to the Tower on Monday, March 1, 1641.¹

The story of Chillingworth's imprisonment is somewhat confused as it comes from contemporary sources. Des Maizeaux, indeed, dismisses it as a bit of hearsay which actually concerned another man with the same name.² In Nalson's An Impartial Collection of Great Affairs of State there is a somewhat garbled account.³ It is upon this that Des Maizeaux has based his judgement. Nalson's story would indicate that Chillingworth had advocated the deposing of the King while the Parliament had upheld the King. Walker says that "I find him some time in Durance in the Tower, for Words against the Parliament"⁴ and this seems to be the heart of what can be known in the case.

¹Trevor-Roper, op. cit., p. 405.

²Des Maizeaux, op. cit., p. 302.

³John Nalson, An Impartial Collection of the Great Affairs of State, (London: 1682), II, 714.

⁴John Walker, An Attempt Towards Recovering an Account of the Numbers and Sufferings of the Clergy of the Church of England, Heads of Colleges, Fellows, Scholars, &c. who were Sequester'd, Harras'd, &c. in the late Times of the Grand Rebellion, (London: 1714), II, 63.

The Journals of the House of Commons refer only to the fact of the imprisonment. On 30 November, 1641, it was "Ordered, That Mr. William Chillingworth be forthwith required to attend this House: and the Serjeant, or his Deputy, do bring him in his Company to the House presently: and that if he shall refuse to come upon Summons, that then he shall be apprehended as a Delinquent."¹ On 1 December, 1641, he was brought in to the House and ordered to be present the next day at 11:00 A.M.² Chillingworth next appeared on 4 December, 1641, when it was

Resolved, upon the Question, That Mr. William Chillingworth shall be sent to the Tower, for Scandals and contempts against this House; there to continue during the Pleasure of this House.

Mr. Chillingworth was called to the Bar: And, kneeling there, Mr. Speaker told him the Offence taken against him, for speaking of Sides in this House, at his declaring his Judgement on Offence, at his Instances of Deposing Princes.

Upon a serious Consideration, the Speaker pronounced this Sentence against him; that he was to go to the Tower, there to remain a Prisoner during the Pleasures of the House.³

Final action was taken in the House on 20 December, 1641, when his petition was read to the House and it was "Resolved, upon

¹Journals of the House of Commons, 1640-1642, II, 327.

²Ibid., p. 329.

³Ibid., p. 332.

the Question, That Mr. Wm. Chillingworth, now a Prisoner in the Tower, by Order of this House, shall be forthwith discharged from any further Imprisonment; and that Mr. Speaker shall issue forth his Warrant to that effect."¹

Freedom from imprisonment did not free Chillingworth from the malevolence of the Puritans. Francis Cheynell, in a pamphlet entitled The Rise, Growth, and Danger of Socinianisme &c., printed in 1643, said:

I admire at the impudence of divers men who have thus freely expressed themselves for the encouragement of the Arminian, Socinian and Popish party, and yet are not ashamed to say that they stand for the Protestant religion. I have seen a letter under Mr. Chillingworths own hand in which he doth excite Dr. Sheldon of All-Soules, and Dean Potter, &c. to stand in defiance of the Parliament, and advises them to stir up the youth (the young laddes of the University as he calls them) to oppose the Parliament; Now can I or any man beleieve that Mr. Chillingworth doth intend to mainatine Calvinisme, I mean pure Protestant Religion?²

He was correct when he suspected that Chillingworth did not intend to maintain Calvinism. In the Religion of Protestants he had declared that he did not know where to stand on the question of election.³ It was not a question of

¹Ibid., p. 350.

²Francis Cheynell, The Rise, Growth, and Danger of Socinianism, (London: 1643), p. 76.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 38, (Answer to preface, 10).

the propagation of any particular doctrine with Chillingworth or his friends.¹ His plea, like that of his friends, was for freedom so that men could be themselves.² His major concern at this time was political, and for Chillingworth the war was "this bloody Tragedy, which is now upon the Stage";³ his description of the war is a classic prophecy of its outcome. Preaching before Charles I on Friday, 13 October, 1643,⁴ he gave his honest judgment:

Seeing Publicans and Sinners on the one Side, against Scribes and Pharisees on the other; on the one Side Hypocrisy, and on the other Profaneness; no Honesty nor Justice on the one Side, and very little Piety on the other; on the one Side, horrible Oaths, Curses, and Blasphemies; on the other, pestilent Lyes, Calumnies, and Perjury: When I see among them the Pretence of Reformation, if not the Desire, pursued by Anti-christian, Mahometan, devilish Means; and amongst us little or no Zeal for Reformation of what is indeed amiss, little or no Care to remove the Cause of God's Anger towards us, by just, lawful, and christian Means; I profess plainly, I cannot without trembling consider, what is likely to be the Event of these Distractions; I cannot but fear, that the Goodness of our Cause may sink under the Burden of our Sins; and that God in his Justice, because we will not suffer his Judgments to atchieve their prime Scope and Intention, which is our Amendment and Reformation, may either deliver us up to the blind Zeal and Fury of our Enemies; or else, which I rather fear, make us Instruments of his Justice each against other, and of our own just and deserved

¹John MacLachlan, Socinianism in Seventeenth Century England, (Oxford: University Press, 1951), p. 82.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 184, (iii, 81).

³Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 5, (I).

⁴Des Maizeaux, op. cit., p. 284.

Confusion.¹

Chillingworth did not live to see his words take on life during the Interregnum and the Restoration, but confusion did reign for a time until each side was forced to compromise so that life might continue. Indeed, that very Parliament which had imprisoned Chillingworth was to put Charles II on the throne.

Chillingworth's attitude toward the war is difficult to assess because "he did really believe all War to be unlawful."² Cheynell reports him as saying that "warre is not the way of Jesus Christ."³ In The Religion of Protestants he had stated unequivocally that the methods of war and the way of the Christian faith are diametrically opposed. The Christian cannot win men by the use of the sword, and the state is not in danger from the private opinions of true Christians.⁴ This attitude is also implicit in his sermon before the King:

And then on the other Side, they that maintain the King's righteous Cause with the Hazard of their Lives and Fortunes, but by their Oaths and Curses, by their Drunkenness and Debauchery, by their Irreligion and Profaneness, fight more powerfully against their Party, than by all other

¹Chillingworth, Sermons, pp. 6-7,(I).

²Hyde, op. cit., p. 58.

³Cheynell, Chillingworthi Novissima, p. 22.

⁴Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, pp. 292-293, (v, 96).

Means they do or can fight for it, are not, I fear, very well acquainted with any Part of the Bible: But that strict Caution, which properly concerns themselves, in the Book of Leviticus, I much doubt they have scarce ever heard of it, When thou goest to War with thine Enemies, then take heed there be no wicked Thing in thee; not only no Wickedness in the Cause thou maintainest, nor no Wickedness in the Means by which thou maintainest it, but no personal Impieties in the Persons that maintain it.¹

Such a condition would go a long way toward making war impossible, and this was the kind of ethics which Chillingworth would apply to war.

Cheynell again catches something of Chillingworth's spirit, if not the reason behind his actions, when he says that "Master Chillingworth did (as all ingenious and active spirits doe) detest Neutrality" ² Clarendon gives a similar motive:

He did not think that the Parliament (whose Proceedings He perfectly abhorred) did in Truth intend to involve the Nation in a Civil War, till after the Battle of Edgehill: and then he thought any Expedient, or Strategem that was like to put a speedy end to it, to be the most commendable.³

It was not without a troubled spirit that he played his part in the war, for, as he answered Cheynell during their discussions near the close of his life,

Sir (saith he) I must acknowledge that I doe verily beleve that the intentions of the Parliament are better

¹Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 6, (I).

²Cheynell, Chillingworthi Novissima, p. 23.

³Hyde, op. cit., p. 58.

than the intentions of the Court, or that of the Army which I have followed: but I conceive that the Parliament takes a wrong course to prosecute and accomplish their good intentions¹

During this early part of the war Chillingworth wrote, but did not publish, several papers which illustrate his attitude toward the political situation. In one entitled Of the unlawfulness of resisting the lawfull Prince although most impious tyrannical and idolatrous he demonstrates that the Civil War cannot be justified on religious grounds. He asks "to what end is all this noyse why must religion bee p-tended and abused" ² This same message is also the burden of his Observations Upon the Scottish Declaration in which he shows his mistrust of the motives that led the Scots to fight with the Parliamentary party. He says that, "They give us a cleere intimation, that their intent is to opose and trouble us in our worldly possessions: but to make us beare this losse wth patience and comfort, they make us great Promises of building the Temple, and reforming Religion:" ³

He goes on to show that, for him the war was essentially a rebellion against lawful authority. It is a "willfull and causeless rebellion against the best of Kings." ⁴ "There is," Chillingworth says, "no fundamentall constitution

¹Cheyne, Chillingworth's Novissima, p. 22.

²Lambeth Palace Library, Lambeth MSS 943, p. 898.

³Ibid., p. 888.

⁴Ibid., p. 889.

for the government of this kingdome by a standing Parliament."¹ According to Dr. Thomas Barlow, the one thing that was never questioned was Chillingworth's loyalty to his king,² and it is in this direction that the motive for his war time activities must be sought. Tulloch sums up the ambiguities in Chillingworth's war time activities:

It is not easy for us to analyse or appreciate all the motives which influenced Chillingworth in this great crisis. All his personal predilections and feelings were wrongly enlisted on the side of the order; and, whatever may have been his rational distrust of many of the principles put forward by the Royalists, he was still more widely separated both by rational conviction and personal feeling from the opposite party.³

Thus, even though he abhorred war as few men in his day did, Chillingworth threw all of his energies into the waging of the war, along with his friend Lord Falkland. Following the lead of Acontius, his teacher in controversial method,⁴ he "mathematically conceived an Engine, that should move so lightly, as to be a Breastwork in all Encounters, and Assaults in the Field."⁵ This ingeniously designed machine he carried to the siege of Gloucester. It was so constructed to provide a protection for musketeers and, at the same time,

¹Cheynell, Chillingworthi Novissima, p. 15.

²Barlow, op. cit., p. 346.

³Tulloch, op. cit., p. 293.

⁴MacLachlan, op. cit., p. 77.

⁵Hyde, op. cit., p. 58.

bridge the moat when the wheels fell into the moat.¹ However, before the machine could be put into action the siege was broken by the Earl of Essex.² Chillingworth then retired again to Oxford where he preached his sermon before the King.

Again Chillingworth went with the army into the field, this time with Lord Hopton who had been appointed commander in the west and was with him when Arundel Castle in Sussex was forced to surrender on 9 December, 1643.³ Chillingworth remained here with the poorly equipped army, many of whom were sick. This Royal garrison was, in turn, forced to surrender to the Parliamentary Army under Sir William Waller, on 6 January, 1644.⁴ Here Chillingworth was taken prisoner, "being broken with Sickness, contracted by the ill Accommodation, and Want of Meat, and Fire during the Siege, which was in a terrible Season of Frost and Snow"⁵

With the Parliamentary Army was the Puritan divine, Francis Cheynell. He was only too happy to have Chillingworth in a position where he could attack his dangerous doctrines personally. Cheynell, indeed, confesses in his

¹Des Maizeaux, op. cit., pp. 280-282.

²Ibid., p. 282.

³Ibid., p. 313.

⁴Ibid., pp. 313-314.

⁵Hyde, op. cit., p. 58.

pamphlet that he had never considered himself to be a friend of Chillingworth; that he had never given "Mr. Chillingworth the right hand of fellowship", and that this hatred was not a new thing.¹

Cheynell published an account of his dealings with Chillingworth in a Pamphlet entitled: Chillingworthi Novissima: or, the Sickness, Heresy, Death, and Buriall of William Chillingworth, (in his own phrase) Clerk of Oxford, and in the conceit of his fellow Souldiers, the Queenes Arch-Engineer, and Grand-Intelligencer. Set forth in a Letter to his Eminent and learned Friends, a Relation of his Apprehension at Arundell, a Discovery of his Errours in a Briefe Catechisme, and a short Oration at the Buriall of his Hereticall Book. Des Maizeaux says that it is "a most ludicrous as well as melancholy instance of Fanaticism or religious madness." However, "we cannot reasonably suspect the truth of the most material passages it contains;"² Cheynell's report of his conversations with Chillingworth does indeed contain ideas which Chillingworth may well have uttered. However, Cheynell probably altered Chillingworth's ideas by a careful selection of those ideas which would have seemed heretical to his readers.

¹Cheynell, Chillingworthi Novissima, pp. 37-38.

²Des Maizeaux, op. cit., p. 315.



Many have tried to explain away Cheynell's treatment of Chillingworth by saying that he was "disorder'd in his Brain."¹ Cheynell however may have understood the times more perfectly for he said, "We live in an angry time, and men will speake passionately when they are provoked, and vexed."² His treatment of Chillingworth falls into two distinct parts; the first is the care which he gave to Chillingworth's ailing body. In this, although he was not successful, he at least tried to do his best. He saw to it that Chillingworth was placed in the palace of the Bishop of Chichester "where he had very courteous usage and all accommodations which were requisite to a sicke man"³

Cheynell's second and major concern was for Chillingworth's soul. He explains in the following account:

I tooke all the care I could of his body whilst he was sicke, and will (as farre as he was innocent) take care of his fame and reputation now he is dead: nay whilst he was alive, I tooke care of something more precious than his health or reputation, to wit, his precious and beloved soule; for in compassion to his soule I dealt freely and plainly with him and told him that he had been very active in fomenting these bloody warres against Parliament and Commonwealth of England, his natural

¹Edmund Calamy, A Continuation of the Account of the Ministers, Lecturers, Masters and Fellows of Colleges, and Schoolmasters, who were Ejected and Silenced after the Restoration in 1660, by or before the Act for Uniformity, (London: 1727), II, 817.

²Cheynell, The Rise of Socinianisme, p. 57.

³Cheynell, Chillingworthi Novissima, p. 15.

country, and by consequent, against the very light of nature.¹

In Cheynell's favor he seeks to make it clear that Chillingworth cannot be held responsible for the loss of Arundel Castle even though this rumor was spreading among the Royalist soldiers. However, in the same breath he accused Chillingworth of being an agent of the Queen and the Papists.²

Cheynell visited Chillingworth as he says because

My heart was moved with compassion towards him, and I gave him many visits after this first visit; but I seldome found him in a fit case to discourse because his disease³ grew stronger and stronger, and he weaker and weaker.³

Cheynell confesses that he dealt sharply with Chillingworth in these latter meetings, for it was the only charitable way to deal with a man in his state.

To Cheynell and others who visited him in order to draw him out concerning his theology, Chillingworth consistently stated that he was settled in his thought and that it was all set down in his book for all to see.⁴ At the same time he told Cheynell that "I have ever followed the dictates of my conscience; and if you convince me that I am in an errour, you shall not find me obstinate."⁵

However, in spite of the medical care, Chillingworth

¹Ibid., p. 20.

²Ibid., p. 24.

³Ibid., p. 25

⁴Ibid., pp. 18, 27, 28.

⁵Ibid., p. 20.

grew weaker. Cheynell attributed this to Chillingworth's apostacy from the true faith: "I entreated him to plucke up his spirits, and not to yield to his disease; but I perceived, that though Reason be stout when it encounters with faith, yet reason is not so valiant when it is to encounter with affliction."¹

Finally on 30 January, 1644, Chillingworth breathed his last.² Arrangements for the funeral were in Cheynell's hands, and he describes it thus: "There were all things which may any way appertaine to the civility of a funerall, though there was nothing which belongs to the superstition of a funerall."³

The funeral was culminated by Cheynell's speech at the grave. Cheynell, knowing full well Chillingworth's desires in the matter of his burial, explains that "I did choose rather to satisfie my owne conscience, than his desire."⁴ When the "Malignants," as Cheynell called the Royalist party, had brought Chillingworth's body to the grave, Cheynell made a speech to them.⁵ Convinced that Chillingworth "did not live or dye a genuine Sonne of the Church of England";⁶ he

¹Ibid., p. 17. ²Des Maizeaux, op. cit., p. 346.

³Cheynell, Chillingworthi Novissima, p. 29.

⁴Ibid., p. 34.

⁵Ibid., p. 38.

⁶Ibid., p. 39.

refused to bury his body himself. Chillingworth's friends took care of the burial after these words by Cheynell:

If they please to undertake the buriall of his corps, I shall undertake to bury his errours, which are published in this so much admired, yet unworthy booke; and happy would it be for this Kingdome, if this booke and all its fellowes could be so buried, that they might never rise more, unlesse it were for a confutation; and happy would it have been for the Author, if he had repented of those errours, that they might never rise for his condemnation; Happy, thrice happy will he be, if his workes doe not follow him, if they never doe rise with him, nor against him.

Get thee gone then, thou cursed booke, which has seduced so many precious soules; get thee gone, thou corrupt rotten booke, earth to earth, and dust to dust; get thee gone into the place of rottennesse, that thou maist rot with thy Author, and see corruption. So much for the buriall of his errours.¹

To complete the task he appended to the story of Chillingworth's last days A Prophane Catechism, collected out of Mr. Chillingworth's Works. In the next century John Locke was recommending Cheynell's book as the "quintessence of railing . . . It ought to be kept as the pattern and standard of that sort of writing, as the man he spends it upon, for that good temper, and clear, and strong arguing."²

In his will, made shortly before his death, Chillingworth demonstrated the principles by which he lived, by leaving money to the town of Oxford to be lent to poor boys and girls

¹Ibid.

²Des Maizeaux, op. cit., p. 370.

that they might be apprenticed. The only limitation was that those to whom the money was to be lent should be really poor.¹

He lies buried on the south side of the cloisters at Chichester.

¹Ibid., p. 347.

CHAPTER II

THE BIBLE ONLY

The Sixteenth century witnessed the breakup of Christendom into mutually hostile and intolerant divisions. As a result of the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church defined its position at the Council of Trent, and each Protestant Church attempted a similar clarification, both as over against Rome, and in relationship to the declarations of other Protestant churches.

Born amid this confusion and led astray by it, Chillingworth sought the one invariable basis of all Christian thought. In doing so, he did not conceive of himself as an apologist for the Church of England only,¹ but rather, sought to defend all Protestants against the machinations of the Roman Catholic controversialists.²

Hence, in accordance with his desire to defend all Protestants, Chillingworth was impelled to seek the fundamental unity of all Protestantism. The need was obvious, for Protestants were continually confronted with the massive,

¹Douglas Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945), p. 327.

²William Chillingworth, Works, The Religion of Protestants; a Safeway to Salvation (tenth edition; London: 1742), Epistle Dedicatory; p. 23 (preface, 40).

monolithic unity of the Church of Rome. The undertaking was further urged on him by the demand of his Jesuit opponent for an exact catalogue of the fundamentals of the Protestant faith.¹ In meeting this demand Chillingworth refrained from volunteering his personal conception of the fundamentals of the Christian faith. The fundamental articles of faith are not contained in any creed, nor in the doctrine of any man, nor in the conflation of the creeds and confessions of all the Protestant churches.²

Chillingworth's major work, The Religion of Protestants, was a "plea for Scriptural Christianity . . .,"³ "the lever with which he sought to upheave and overthrow the tenets of Popery"⁴ The real heart of his position is this:

Know then, Sir, that when I say the Religion of Protestants is in Prudence to be preferred before yours, as on the one Side, I do not understand by your Religion, the Doctrine of Bellarmino, or Baronius, or any other private Man amongst you; nor the Doctrine of the Sorbonne, or of the Jesuits, or of the Dominicans, or of any other particular Company among you, but that wherein you all agree, or profess to agree, The Doctrine of the Council of Trent; so accordingly on the other Side, by the Religion of Protestants, I do not understand the Doctrine of Luther, or Calvin, or Melancthon; nor the Confession of Augusta, or Geneva, nor the Catechism of Heidelberg, nor the Articles of the Church of England, nor the Harmony of Protestant Confessions; but that wherein

¹Ibid., p. 148, (iii, 13). ²Ibid., p. 354 (vi, 56).

³Bush, op. cit., p. 327.

⁴John Stoughton, History of Religion in England, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1881), IV, 310. See also Chillingworth, op. cit., p. 22, (preface, 30).

they all agree, and which all subscribe with a greater Harmony, as a perfect Rule of their Faith and Actions; that is, the BIBLE. The BIBLE, I say, the BIBLE only, is the Religion of Protestants!¹

Chillingworth's experience with the Roman Catholic demand for unity through submission to the Pope had sent him back to Protestantism, but not merely to the historic position of the Church of England:

For, though they were ready enough to appeal to Scripture against Rome, they also appealed to Christian antiquity against Puritanism. Chillingworth's method of reasoning betrayed an absence of sympathy with High Church Divines in their reverence for the early Fathers, and showed how he fixed his religious opinions solely upon the basis of the written revelation, as interpreted by reason.²

He stated that this reliance on Scripture came to him through experience:

I for my part, after a long, and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial Search of the true Way to eternal Happiness, do profess plainly, that I cannot find any Rest for the Sole of my Foot, but upon this Rock only . . . In a Word, there is no sufficient Certainty but of Scripture only, for any considering Man to build upon. This therefore, and this only, I have Reason to believe³

The Bible, he says, is "the first and most known Principle in Christianity" ⁴

The first argument of Chillingworth in stating his

¹Chillingworth, op. cit., p. 354, (vi 56).

²Stoughton, op. cit., p. 310.

³Chillingworth, op. cit., p. 354, (vi, 56).

⁴Ibid., p. 94, (ii, 51).

position in distinction to that of Rome is his argument for the necessity of Holy Scripture: "In a Word, there is no sufficient Certainty but of Scripture only, for any considering Man to build upon."¹ Had God intended that men should rely on the Church as their one guide, the assertion of the existence of an infallible Church would be the one item of revelation.² Even in this case the Bible is necessary.

The necessity for Scripture is drawn from Chillingworth's concept of the autonomy of the individual. He was convinced that all men are to make their own examination of religion; it is impossible for a man to have any religion except by exercising rational choice.³ Thus man must have an authority to which he is subject a priori. This final authority is the Holy Scripture: "The Means whereby the revealed Truths of God are conveyed to our Understanding . . . [is] not a Church, but the Scripture"⁴

The major thesis of Chillingworth's book is that men are required by God to take the safest way to the goal of eternal life.⁵ Indeed, his concluding chapter is meant to demonstrate that Protestantism is that safer way to salvation.

¹Ibid., p. 354, (vi, 56). ²Ibid., pp. 332-333, (vi, 20).

³Ibid., p. 82, (ii, 11). ⁴Ibid., p. 22, (preface, 32).

⁵Ibid., p. 372, (vii, 8).

Moreover, in the sixth chapter he states: "The BIBLE only is the Religion of Protestants."¹ Therefore he spends a good deal of effort in the attempt to compare the Bible with the church, to the disparagement of the latter. There can be no doubt that this is intended to be an appeal for rational faith even though it may mean the loss of all faith in the process. It is an appeal for a faith based on an impartial examination of the only available evidence, the Bible.²

Throughout this discussion the word Church will be used in its most common meaning in Chillingworth's book: that is, the Church is a human institution purely and simply, a collection or society of men.³ The concept of Holy Scripture is much more complex than that of the Church. This concept will be enlarged throughout the chapter but the Bible, as asserted against the Church, is, quite simply, the book that contains the revealed truth of God in fixed form.

The Church always suffers when compared with the Holy Scripture. The Bible alone possesses all the marks that the Roman Catholics claim for their Church, and it has them to a greater degree than that Church: it is more ancient than any Church, it is a better means to preserve unity, and it is more

¹Ibid., p. 354, (vi, 56).

²Ibid., p. 357-358, (vi, 72); p. 79, (ii, 3).

³Ibid., p. 120, (ii, 142); p. 152, (iii, 21); p. 156, (iii, 30).

universal than any Church can ever pretend to be. "Whatsoever," he says, "may be pretended to gain to your Church the Credit of a Guide, all that and much more may be said for the Scripture."¹

The Church has lost its "Integrity":²

I see plainly, and with my own Eyes, that there are Popes against Popes, Councils against Councils, some Fathers against others, the same Fathers against themselves, a Consent of Fathers of one Age against a Consent of Fathers of another Age, the Church of one Age against the Church of another Age.³

Against this welter of interpretation Chillingworth suggests that individuals may make their choices solely on the basis of the Bible. Men cannot rely on the Church because it is ambiguous.

Corresponding to the ambiguous nature of the Church's proposals is the tyranny that the Church exercises over the conscience of believers. The claim of the Church to be the teacher must be dismissed because it goes counter to the absolute demand: "Teach not for Doctrine the Commandments of Men."⁴ The "Christian Religion is res tradita, non inventa; a Matter of Tradition, not of Man's Invention; is what the Church received from the Apostles (and by Consequence what the Apostles delivered to the Church) and the Apostles from

¹Ibid., p. 355, (vi, 58). ²Ibid., p. 331, (vi, 17).

³Ibid., p. 354, (vi, 56). ⁴Ibid., p. 78, (ii, 1).

Christ, and Christ from God."¹ Far from scrupulously observing the Biblical faith, the Church has perverted the Scriptures making them "Servants and Instruments, always pres'd and in Readiness to advance . . . Designs"²

Chillingworth asks men to examine the Bible in complete freedom from all prejudice. Nowhere does he indicate that men's hearing of the Word is conditioned by their previous hearing of it in a Church. The nearest he comes to referring to a conditioning process is his autobiographical account of his conversion to Romanism, when he says that he was rational according to the principles of his education.³ In every other instance reason is presumed to be free and unprejudiced; it is this free reason that hears and responds to the Word.

Similarly he argues that the Scripture is universal. Therefore to assert the claim of one Church is to disclaim the Scripture. In the experience of men, only the claim of the Bible is valid, as he argues against Rome in particular:

For all the Christians in the World (those I mean, that deserve this Name) do now and always have believed the Scripture to be the Word of God, so much of it at least, as contains all Things necessary; whereas only you say, that you only are the Church of God, and all Christians besides you deny it.⁴

¹William Chillingworth, Works, Additional Discourses, (fifth edition; London: 1742), p. 190.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 78, (ii, 1).

³Ibid., p. 297, (v, 103). ⁴Ibid., p. 355, (vi, 58).

The necessity of Scripture, and the falsity of the claim of the Church, is further shown by appeal to the moral demands of the Scripture when compared to the moral demands of the Church. In the text his argument is directed at Rome, but it applies generally to any Church which claims the exclusive right to direct men to salvation. The express command of God is to follow the Bible rather than the Church; to "rely on the Direction of God himself"¹ is "God's express Warrant and Command" with "no Colour of any Prohibition"² There are no Scriptural commands to seek the Church,³ indeed the Bible seems to contain an express command not to follow the Church.⁴

In comparing the Church with the Bible, Chillingworth first points to the conformity of the Church's way with the way of the world. Consequently, the Church's authority, which is carnal in method, is the antithesis of the Scripture's authority.⁵ The Church was founded in pure spirituality, for the Apostles lacked both worldly means and worldly goals:⁶ "Following the Scripture only, I shall embrace a Religion of admirable Simplicity, consisting in a manner wholly in the Worship of God, in Spirit, and in Truth"⁷ True

¹Ibid., p. 220, (iv, 53).

²Ibid., p. 355, (vi, 61).

³Ibid., p. 161, (iii, 41).

⁴Ibid., p. 355, (vi, 61).

⁵Ibid., p. 356, (vi, 66).

⁶Ibid., (vi, 67).

⁷Ibid., (vi, 68).

worship of God based on the Scripture does not seek the overthrow of the established political order.¹

Secondly, the church does not confirm the rational nature of man. The Church asks men to support a great building on a weak foundation. The Bible makes no such requirements of men.² Chillingworth held as one of his basic tenets that men are not required by God to have a faith greater than the rational inducements to that faith;³ to ask for more is to ask man to deny the essence of his humanity. Therefore his catalogue of the agreements of reason and the Scriptures may be taken as an indictment of the Church and its requirements:

Following the Scripture, I shall believe many Mysteries, but no Impossibilities; many Things above Reason, but nothing against it; many Things, which had they not been revealed, Reason could never have discovered, but nothing which by true Reason may be confuted; many Things, which Reason cannot comprehend how they can be, but nothing which Reason can comprehend that it cannot be.⁴

Running consistently through these arguments is Chillingworth's notion of the basic cleavage between Church and Scripture. This false idea arose out of a concept of the autonomy of man which Chillingworth insisted upon in combatting the Roman position. The need to assert the clear

¹Ibid., (vi, 65). ²Ibid., p. 356, (vi, 64).

³Ibid., p. 327, (vi, 7); p. 58, (i, 8).

⁴Ibid., p. 355, (vi, 62).

authority of the original revelation in Christ¹ caused this authority of the Bible to be asserted against the Roman claim that authority resided in that Church and none other. Once the Roman contention, that the Bible depends on the Church for its being, is allowed, then the Church becomes the dominant feature of Christianity. But the Roman Catholic Church supports her claim to absolute authority by Scriptural proofs, thereby asserting the primacy of Scripture: "We must be surer of the Proof, than of the thing proved; otherwise it is no Proof."² The circular argument of the Roman Church is "a fair way to make them that understand themselves, believe neither Church nor Scripture."³

Therefore if the Bible is the unum necessarium of the Christian faith, the Church may be regarded only as the recipient of revelation:

If you regard the Conception and Production of these Writings, they were the Writings of particular Men: But if you regard the Reception and Approbation of them, they may be well called the Writings of the Church, as having the Attestation of the Church, to have been written by those that were inspired and directed by God. As a Statute, though penned by some one Man, yet being ratified by the Parliament, is called the Act, not of that Man, but of Parliament.⁴

In this sense Parliament can only be thought of as the

¹Ibid., p. 167, (iii, 50); pp. 221-222, (iv, 55-56).

²Ibid., p. 355, (vi, 59). ³Ibid., p. 13, (preface, 8).

⁴Ibid., p. 177, (iii, 69).

ratifier of laws; the writing and observing of laws is an individual responsibility. The only Church that the Scriptures may be said to belong to is the Apostolic Church (a particular Church) which lives in these writings but is not now in the world in any other fashion.¹

The Bible does not depend on the witness of an infallible Church for its inspiration: "The experience of innumerable Christians is against it, who are sufficiently assured, that the Scripture is divinely inspired, and yet deny the infallible Authority of your Church, or any other."² Ultimately the Bible depends only on the truth of God. The revelation of God is the one "metaphysically certain"³ fact that men have to rely on, in this sense: "All which God reveals for Truth, is True"⁴

That which does testify to the divine authority of the Bible is universal tradition: "For neither is that true which you pretend, That we possess the Scripture from you, or take it upon the Integrity of your Custody; but upon Universal Tradition, of which you are but a little Part."⁵ Universal tradition is "the general Consent of Christians of all Nations and Ages, a far greater Company than that of the Church of

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 16, (preface, 14).

³Ibid., p. 59 (i, 8).

⁴Ibid., p. 58, (i, 8).

⁵Ibid., p. 79, (ii, 2).

Rome . . . delivering universally the Scripture for the Word of God . . . ,"¹ testifying that the "Doctrine itself is very fit and worthy to be thought to come from God, nec vox hominem sonat"² Even the Jews, although they are "Enemies of Christ, add no small Moment for the Authority of some Part of it."³ The Bible, in turn, limits absolutely the content of this universal tradition; no Church or unwritten doctrine can claim the same universal attestation.⁴

Therefore when Chillingworth says that "the BIBLE only is the Religion of Protestants" it is manifest that he is maintaining not only the absolute necessity of Holy Scripture but also the absolute perfection of it. There is only one true course of revelation: that is "by God to the Apostles, and by the Apostles to the Church"⁵ Unwritten traditions have no place in faith, "because nothing can challenge our Belief, but what hath descended to us from Christ by original and universal Tradition. Now nothing but Scripture hath thus descended to us, therefore nothing but Scripture can chall-

¹Chillingworth, Additional Discourses, p. 181.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 220, (iv, 53).

³Chillingworth, Additional Discourses, p. 181.

⁴Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 126, (ii, 155); pp. 163-164, (iii, 46); Additional Discourses, p. 181.

⁵Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 155, (iii, 28).

enge our Belief."¹

The Bible alone is sufficient; the whole body of Christ's revelation is written in the Scriptures; to say anything less than this is to destroy the principle of the revelation of God. The revelations must be known. Where they are not known, God "hath freed us from the Obligation of believing them: For every Obligation ceaseth, when it becomes impossible."² The Bible may only be said to be "a perfect Rule of Faith" if it is "compleat and total, and not only an imperfect and partial Rule."³ Tradition is then like candles to the sun or crutches to a man with legs, and is not needed by those who have the Bible.⁴ Or, the Bible is like a perfect guide to a man who is on a journey so that he himself does not need to know the way, or it may be said to be like a man who knows the way and thus has no need of a guide.⁵

In rejecting oral tradition, Chillingworth demanded the revelation be bounded by being written; if Scripture is a perfect rule of faith: "you must then grant it both so compleat, that it needs no Addition, and so evident, that it needs no Interpretation; For both these Properties are

¹Ibid., p. 126, (ii, 156); p. 22, (preface, 32).

²Ibid., p. 164, (iii, 46). ³Ibid., p. 81, (ii, 8).

⁴Ibid., p. 122, (ii, 144). ⁵Ibid., pp. 82-83, (ii, 12).

requisite to a perfect Rule, and a Writing is capable of both these Properties."¹ Therefore that Church which asks its members to believe oral, as opposed to written, tradition, forfeits the right to be a guide in matters of faith, "For she cannot teach all divine Verities, if she cannot write them down . . . ," and the Church may not write them down unless it is already written that they are inspired.² In the demand that men accept some unwritten and therefore uncertain doctrines, the Church is teaching an heretical doctrine similar to Gnosticism.³

The Bible remains a perfectly adequate guide because its purity is not associated with the Church directly. Otherwise its perfection would be marred. The Roman Church maintained that "the Scripture stands in need of some watchful and unerring Eye to guard it" To which Chillingworth answered: "This is no other than the watchful Eye of Divine Providence"⁴ "God is not defective in Things necessary; neither will he leave himself without Witness, nor the World without Means of knowing his Will and doing it."⁵ It is, in fact, impossible that even a corrupted Church should corrupt the Scriptures.⁶ It is no proof of a Church's

¹Ibid., p. 80, (ii, 5). ²Ibid., p. 80, (ii, 7).

³Ibid., p. 213, (iv, 41). ⁴Ibid., p. 85, (ii, 24).

⁵Ibid., p. 105, (ii, 93). ⁶Ibid., p. 349, (vi, 38).

reverence toward the Scriptures if, in spite of the Church, the Scriptures remain uncorrupted. They may be preserved "entire, not for Want of Will, but of Power to corrupt them, as it is a hard thing to poison the Sea."¹ God alone assures the purity of the Bible:

Can anything be more palpably inconsistent with his Goodness, than to suffer Scripture to be undiscernably corrupted in any Matter of moment, and yet to exact of Men the Belief of those Verities, which without their Fault, or Knowledge, or Possibility of Prevention, were defaced out of them. So that God requiring Men to believe Scripture in its Purity, engages himself to see it preserved in sufficient Purity; and you need not fear but he will satisfy his Engagement.²

Chillingworth perceived that the discussion of a pure or uncorrupted text of the Bible did not become a major issue until the Roman Church attempted to promulgate the Vulgate as the normal text.³ He held that it had always been recognized that the Scriptures may possibly be corrupted "in Matters of little moment, such as concern not the Covenant between God and Man."⁴ It is not possible that any man may have "any true, and real, and rational Assurance . . ."⁵ of the absolute purity of the biblical texts. The certainty of the purity of the text of Scripture is of another rank, as he explains: "Not so certain, I grant, as of that which we can

¹Ibid., p. 79, (ii, 2). ²Ibid., p. 85, (ii, 24).

³Ibid., p. 95, (ii, 56). ⁴Ibid., p. 95, (ii, 55).

⁵Ibid., p. 96, (ii, 57).

demonstrate; but certain enough, morally certain, as certain as the Nature of the Thing will bear: So certain we may be, and God requires no more."¹

This assurance that the Bible is uncorrupted is a subjective assurance, and depends upon the Bible's agreeing in kind with all other books:

For the Incorruption of Scripture; I know no other rational Assurance we can have of it, than such as we have of the Incorruption of other ancient Books, that is, the Consent of ancient Copies: such I mean, for the Kind, though it may be far greater, for the Degree of it. And if the Spirit of God give any Man any other Assurance hereof, this is not rational and discursive, but supernatural and infused. An Assurance to himself, but no Argument to another.²

Here he seems to forget that much of his argument is based on the fact of a written revelation. He argues that "neither doth being written make the Word of God the more infallible, nor being unwritten make it the less infallible"³

The purity of the Scripture rests squarely on the truth of the revelation given to the apostles and prophets. It is this truth that men build upon.⁴ It is likewise apparent that this primary revelation is true, for God does not set his hand and seal to the confirmation of falsehoods.⁵

In his understanding of the Scripture Chillingworth

¹Ibid., p. 95, (ii, 55). ²Ibid., p. 154, (iii, 27).

³Ibid., p. 163, (iii, 45). ⁴Ibid., p. 156, (iii, 30).

⁵Ibid., p. 156, (iii, 31).

followed the lead of the continental Reformers in postulating that "the 'Word of God' was contained in it, rather than present in every syllable."¹ If it can be said that the whole gospel - i.e., the covenant between God and man, is contained in the gospels of Mark and John, then it is apparent that there are many things in the other gospels which are only profitable and not necessary.² The Bible itself confesses that not all in it is worthy to be called divine revelation:

Therefore when St. Paul says, in the 1 Epist. to the Corinth. vii. 12. To the rest speak I, not the Lord; and again, Concerning Virgins I have no Commandment of the Lord, but I deliver my Judgment: If we will pretend that the Lord did certainly speak when St. Paul spake, and that his Judgment was God's Commandment, shall we not plainly contradict St. Paul, and that Spirit by which he wrote? which moved him to write, as in other Places divine Revelations, which he certainly knew to be such; so in this Place, his own Judgment touching some Things which God had not particularly revealed unto him.³

Notwithstanding this distinction between the words of men and the Word of God in the Bible, Chillingworth appears to have considered the terms "revelation" and "Scripture" to be equals. There is not apparent anywhere a distinction between the Holy Scripture and the mighty acts of God by which rev-

¹Basil Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1949), p. 67; Heinrich Heppe, Reformed Dogmatics, ed. Ernst Bizer, trans. G.T. Thomson, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1950), p. 15f.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, pp. 212-213, (iv, 40).

³Ibid., p. 157, (iii, 32).

elation was made. The revelation, for Chillingworth, consisted in the disclosure of timeless, eternal truths. The validity of this assertion may be seen in the passages in which he compares the revelation to the systems of the great philosophers.¹

Where, then, are these timeless, eternal truths recorded? Chillingworth says that he accepted as the Bible "those Books of Scripture, which were never doubted of in the Church . . .,"² almost the exact words used in the sixth article of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.

However, Chillingworth seems to have parted company with the official position of the Church of England, which regarded the Apocryphal books as part of the inspired Word of God.³ He himself does not appear to think that the Apocryphal books are part of the canon.⁴ The definition of a canonical book is that it is part of the Word of God.⁵ Nevertheless,

¹Ibid., p. 161, (iii, 40); p. 376, (vii, 20); pp. 347-348, (vi, 38); p. 264, (v, 21).

²Ibid., p. 43, (answer to preface, 26); p. 212, (iv, 40).

³H. Edward Symonds, The Council of Trent and the Anglican Formularies, (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), pp. 7, 8.

⁴Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 90, (ii, 39).

⁵Ibid., p. 159, (iii, 35).

an individual may, in reason, question those books whose canonicity has at some time been held to be doubtful.¹ He would limit himself to those books that could be called canonical, strictly speaking.

At the same time Chillingworth implies, in the course of his argument, a substantive difference between the books of the canon. Although he states that all books of the Bible are infallible,² he rests his argument wholly on the New Covenant. Every one of the gospels contains the "whole Substance," that is, "all the necessary Parts of the Gospel of Christ."³ Each of the evangelists wrote "not the whole History of Christ, but all that makes up the Covenant between God and Man."⁴ Herein he seems to agree with the Socinians and Anabaptists, who asserted the substantive difference between the books of the Old and the New Testaments.⁵ With them, certainly, he places the acceptance of the canon on completely rational grounds. The acceptance of the canon must be on such an authority that the autonomous man may accept it.⁶

Canonical authority, for Chillingworth, rests neither

¹Ibid., p. 90, (ii, 38). ²Ibid., p. 385, (conclusion).

³Ibid., p. 213, (iv, 43). ⁴Ibid., pp. 212-213, (iv, 40).

⁵Heppe, op. cit., p. 13.

⁶Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 91, (ii, 43-45).

on the Church directly nor on a mechanical theory of inspiration. Canonical authority rests squarely on content which, in Chillingworth's concept, was the revelation of truths from "God the Eternal Truth."¹ The foundation of the Christian faith is in "the universal truth of Scripture."² Only if the Bible is "true absolutely and in all Things . . ."³ can it be the starting point for faith. That is, it is true in all things which it itself does not deny to be divine revelations: "That Abraham begat Isaac, that St. Paul had a Cloak, that Timothy was sick; because these, though not fundamental, i.e., not essential Parts of Christianity, yet are evidently and undeniably set down in Scripture, and consequently, may be without all Rashness proposed . . . as certain divine Revelations."⁴ This revelation is the donation of truth to man. But the fact that all Scripture is inspired does not mean that its truths are all on the same level; on the contrary, the Bible contains truths of two distinct sorts: those which

were written because they were necessary to be believed; (of which rank are those only which constitute and make up the Covenant between God and Man in Christ:) and then such as are necessary to be believed not in themselves, but only by accident, because they were written;

¹Ibid., p. 42 (answer to preface, 22).

²Ibid., p. 160, (iii, 37).

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 153, (iii, 26).

of which rank are many Matters of History, of Prophecy, of Mystery, of Policy, of Oeconomy, and such like, which are evidently not intrinsic to the Covenant¹

The requirement of God is not belief in inspiration, but rather this: "That we should believe the Doctrine of the Gospel to be Truths, not all, necessary Truths, for all are not so"² God does not ask men to look upon the Bible as equally inspired.

The belief that the Bible conveys timeless, eternal truths to men, is expressed in Chillingworth's insistence on action based on those truths. God has made man dependent on the timeless, eternal truths for all Christian devotion and action. The Scriptures are deserving of study because "the Scripture it self tells us, All Scripture is profitable. And the Scripture is not so much the Words as the Sense."³ The Bible is a utilitarian volume: "The End that God aims at, is the Belief of the Gospel, the Covenant between God and Man; the Scripture he hath provided as a Means for this End"⁴ The Bible is written "by God's Direction for the Direction of the World"⁵ It is God's book in a distinctive way; "we [are to] believe the Matter of the Gospel, and not that it is contained in these Books. So that the Books of

¹Ibid., p. 46 (answer to preface, 27).

²Ibid., p. 168, (iii, 52). ³Ibid., p. 105, (ii, 94).

⁴Ibid., p. 89, (ii, 32). ⁵Ibid., p. 220, (iv, 53).

Scripture are not so much the Objects of our Faith, as the Instruments of conveying it to our Understanding; and not so much the Being of Christian Doctrine, as requisite to the Well-being of it."¹

The attitude of men to the Bible is not to be one of reverence for a book, for the requirement of God is "only to believe the Verities therein contained and not the divine Authority of the Books wherein they are contained."² Chillingworth held it not inconceivable that a man might believe the doctrine of the Scripture - i.e., the timeless, eternal truths - and be saved, even though he did not believe it to be the Word of God.³ Article six of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England does not mean that the Bible is to be an object of faith:⁴ "to little purpose is verbal Reverence without entire Submission and sincere Obedience"⁵ His great fear was that the Bible is only held in reverence; that men do not act on the truth that it contains: "This Book, and the Religion of Christ contained in it, among an Infinity of Professors, labours with great Penury of true Believers."⁶

¹Ibid., p. 127, (ii, 159). ²Ibid., p. 128, (ii, 159).

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 89, (ii, 32).

⁵Ibid., p. 78, (ii, 1).

⁶Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 7, (I).

With all his regard for the truth that the Bible contains, Chillingworth would limit its authority to the believer,¹ even though the Scriptures must, in some sense, go before faith.² God does not compell men to faith: he leads them, as he led the Magi by the star or the children of Israel by the cloud and the fire. God only "desires" that men should follow the Bible and live by the faith therein contained.³ It is not reasonable to expect the non-believer to regard the Bible as the Word of God because "nothing in question can be a Proof to it self."⁴ Indeed, God has means of revealing himself beside the Scriptures or the infallible Church.⁵

How then, without any external compulsion, may men recognize the Word of God in the Bible? It is clear that, for Chillingworth, the acknowledgement of the Church is not the determining factor. In commenting on an ambiguous passage from Hooker, he contends that the Church is "the first outward motive, not the last Assurance whereon we

¹John Tulloch, Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1872), I, 28.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 92, (ii, 48).

³Ibid., p. 105, (ii, 93). ⁴Ibid., p. 126, (ii, 156).

⁵Ibid., p. 115, (ii, 123).

rest."¹ Since the inspiration of the Bible does not depend on the Church,² men cannot rely on the Church for their assurance.

Neither is it sufficient to acknowledge the Bible's own claim to authority. The Bible may, in itself, be a perfect rule of faith, but "a Writing could not be proved to us to be a perfect Rule of Faith, by its own saying so, for nothing is proved true by being said or written in a Book"³ It must be proved to be a perfect rule of faith, the Word of God, by something "credible of it self."⁴ Therefore, recognition of the authority of the Bible is personal and individual, "because our Obligation expressly to know any divine Truth, must arise from God's manifest Revealing of it, and his revealing unto us that he hath revealed it, and that his Will is, we should believe it"⁵ This understanding of the true course of revelation recurs again and again in his writing.⁶ This is an argument from the autonomous nature of the individual for "without any the least

¹Ibid., p. 88, (ii, 30), footnote.

²Ibid., p. 354, (vi, 45); p. 16, (preface 14).

³Ibid., p. 81, (ii, 8). ⁴Ibid., p. 81, (ii, 8).

⁵Ibid., p. 151, (iii, 19).

⁶Ibid., p. 37, (answer to preface, 8); pp. 148-149, (iii, 13); pp. 202-203, (iv, 13); p. 210, (iv, 35).

Dishonour to God's eternal never-failing Veracity, I may doubt of, or deny some Truth revealed by him, if I neither know nor believe it to be revealed by him."¹

What then is the process by which individuals make this personal discovery of the divine truths contained in Holy Scripture? Confirmation does not come wholly from within the Scriptures themselves; "intrinsical Arguments,"² though they give more assurance than the Church, are not to be counted as the final assurance. Protestants do not maintain

that these particular Books are the Word of God, . . . [is a fact] either to be in itself evidently certain, or of itself, and being divested of Motives of Credibility, evidently credible: . . . What then do they affirm of it? Certainly, no more than this, that whatsoever Man that is not of a perverse Mind, shall weigh with serious and mature Deliberation, those great Moments of Reason which may incline him to believe the Divine Authority of Scripture, and compare them with the light Objections, that in Prudence can be made against it, he shall not chuse but find sufficient, nay abundant Inducements to yield unto it firm Faith, and sincere Obedience.³

Characteristically, Chillingworth does not speak of the Holy Spirit, perhaps because he considered its work to be secret⁴ and resistable.⁵ Therefore it is by reason that

¹Ibid., p. 150, (iii, 16).

²Ibid., p. 88, (ii, 30), footnote.

³Ibid., p. 359, (vi, 51). ⁴Ibid., p. 111, (ii, 110).

⁵Ibid., pp. 105-106, (ii, 95).

men come to rely on the tradition "that the Book which we call Scripture, was confirmed abundantly by the Works of God, to be the Word of God."¹ Men, because they are rational, must bow to the eternal truth of God: "Believing it the Word of God, he must of necessity believe it true"² Scripture is received as a principle common to all Christians;³ therefore, the assurance that the Bible is the Word of God must come by a principle common to all men, which it is inferred is natural reason.⁴ Chillingworth himself confirms that he has no other inducement than reason in affirming Scripture to be the Word of God;

I shall believe nothing which Reason will not convince me that I ought to believe it: For Reason will convince any Man, unless he be of a perverse Mind, that Scripture is the Word of God: And then no Reason can be greater than this; God says so therefore it is true.⁵

Chillingworth was so intent on placing the acceptance of the authority of the Bible on rational grounds that he very nearly puts the autonomous individual on a par with the equally autonomous God of truth. However, he was true to his own thought concerning the nature of the biblical revelation and would have vehemently denied that he was doing violence

¹Ibid., p. 220, (iv, 53); cf. pp. 103-104, (ii, 88).

²Ibid., p. 220, (iv, 53). ³Ibid., p. 94, (ii, 51).

⁴Ibid., p. 89, (ii, 30).

⁵Ibid., p. 359, (vi, 51); cf. p. 355, (vi, 62).

to the biblical concept of faith. His entire argument against Rome is based on the objective validity of truths of God as they are contained in Holy Scripture. Reason, therefore, apprehends the Word of God, not because the Word conforms to human reason, but because that reason is in no way denied by the Word.¹

If the acceptance of the authority of Scripture is on individual, rational grounds, then the right of interpretation, also, belongs to rational individuals. Protestantism, Chillingworth contends, maintains a strict individuality: "That there is any Man, or any Company of Men appointed to be Judge for all Men, that we deny" ² People in England do not obey the law of that kingdom according to the interpretation of the king of France.³

This right of private interpretation is not to be a license, but is to be liberty within the bonds of reason. Here he stayed close to the general Anglican tradition which did not trust the testimonium spiritus sacti interni which could not be checked by reason and tradition.⁴ The Holy Ghost only "speaks in Scripture," to use Chillingworth's

¹Ibid., p. 355, (vi, 62). ²Ibid., p. 82, (ii, 11).

³Ibid., p. 14, (preface, 10).

⁴Alan Richardson, in Biblical Authority for Today, eds., Alan Richardson and Wolfgang Schweitzer, (London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1951), p. 119.

phrase, but the problem of interpretation yet remains.¹ Men must reserve judgment until the Holy Ghost has made his meaning clear.² If the Holy Ghost were to force men to believe correctly, this would take away their free-will in believing and professing that belief.³ Thus the only "private spirit" that Chillingworth will permit is "every Man's particular Reason . . . ," and interpretation of the Bible is not referred to a

private Spirit . . . which some Men pretend, but cannot prove to come from the Spirit of God: . . . For is there not a manifest Difference between saying, The Spirit of God tells me, that this is the Meaning of such a Text (which no Man can possibly know to be true, it being a secret Thing) and between saying, These and these Reasons I have to shew; . . . that this or that is the Meaning of such a Scripture? Reason being a publick and certain Thing, and exposed to all Mens Trial and Examination.⁴

Therefore in Chillingworth, the Holy Spirit, if not clearly identified with human rationality, is subordinated to the reason in man.

Hence Chillingworth presents the perspicuity of the Word of God to the rational man: "The Scripture . . . in Things necessary is plain and perfect . . .";⁵ "all Things necessary to be believed are evidently contained in Scripture

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 83, (ii, 13).

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 106, (ii, 96).

⁴Ibid., p. 111, (iii, 110). ⁵Ibid., p. 83, (ii, 12).

and what is not there evidently contained, cannot be necessary to be believed."¹ "Who is there that is not capable of a sufficient Understanding of the Story, the Precepts, the Promises, and the Threats of the Gospel?"² All men can understand "so much as is sufficient for their Direction to Heaven."³ All men are able to apprehend the meaning of the covenant between God and man, and consequently, the whole gospel.⁴

This clear light of the Bible will come to those who read it with an open mind. "Men, we say, are obliged under pain of Damnation, to seek the true Sense of it, and not to wrest it to their pre-conceived Fancies."⁵ Here Chillingworth's own experience, as he explains it, is determinative. "I," he says, "have evened the Scale of my Judgment as much as possibly I could, and have not willingly allowed one Grain of worldly Motives . . ." that is, "with such Indifference, as if there were nothing in the World but God and myself . . ."⁶ God will find no fault with the man who errs in interpreting

¹Ibid., p. 126, (ii, 156). ²Ibid., p. 110, (ii, 105).

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 47, (answer to preface, 27).

⁵Ibid., p. 83, (ii, 12).

⁶William Chillingworth, Works, Reasons against Popery, (London: 1742), pp. 391-392.

the Bible if that error is not voluntary.¹

When there are reasons, judgment cannot be suspended,² but where there is no clear rational lead, judgment must be suspended: "It being not fundamental, nor required of Almighty God, to believe the true Sense of Scripture in all Places, but only that we should endeavour to do so, and be prepared in Mind to do so, whensoever it shall be sufficiently propounded to us."³ "Witness the great Diversity of Texts of Scripture, whereof some are so plain and evident, that no Man of ordinary Sense can mistake the Sense of them. Some are so obscure and ambiguous, that to say, this or this is the certain Sense of them, were high Presumption."⁴ The obscure passages of Scripture do not need a definitive interpretation:

If you say, that the obscure Places of Scripture contain Matters of Faith: I answer, that it is a Matter of Faith to believe, that the Sense of them, whatsoever it is, which was intended by God, is true; for he that doth not so, calls God's Truth into question. But to believe this or that to be the true Sense of them, or, to believe the true Sense of them, and to avoid the false, is not necessary either to Faith or Salvation. For if God would have had his Meaning in these Places certainly known, how could it stand with his Wisdom, to be so wanting to his own Will and End, as to speak obscurely?

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 167, (iii, 52); cf. pp. 109-110, (ii, 104); pp. 43-45, (answer to preface, 26).

²Chillingworth, Reasons against Popery, p. 392.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 168, (iii, 52).

⁴Ibid., p. 152, (iii, 24).

Or how can it consist with his Justice, to require of Men to know certainly the Meaning of those Words, which he himself hath not revealed?¹

God will, in Chillingworth's view, take account of the various individual factors in biblical interpretation, for men "by Reason of their different Educations, are fashioned and shaped for the Entertainment of various Opinions"²

Therefore there is no use of an analogia fidei in Chillingworth's writings; all proceeds according to rational principles. This does not limit men to the exact letter of the Bible, but it does limit men to no more than "whatsoever structure is naturally and rationally laid upon [the Scriptures] , whatsoever Conclusion may to my Understanding be evidently deduced from them."³ This means, "we pretend not at all to any Assurance that we cannot err, but only to a sufficient Certainty, that we do not err, but rightly understand those Things that are plain, whether Fundamental, or not Fundamental"⁴ Each man interprets the Bible for himself only; a maliciously false interpretation endangers no one else.⁵

"Believe the Scripture in the true Sense, and . . .

¹Ibid., p. 117, (ii, 127). ²Ibid., pp. 152-153, (iii, 24).

³Ibid., pp. 59-60, (i, 10).

⁴Ibid., pp. 166-167, (iii, 50).

⁵Ibid., p. 115, (ii, 122).

live according to it,"¹ is the burden of Chillingworth's plea to his time. His own theology, as well as his case against the Roman Catholic Church, stands or falls to the extent that he is able to combine the idea of revelation with his understanding of man. If either the necessity, sufficiency, or perspicuity of the Word of God is not permitted in his sense, then his rational man is delivered into the world footloose and fancy free.

¹Ibid., p. 43, (answer to preface, 26).

CHAPTER III

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

The authority of Holy Scripture can only be the starting point for Christian theology. From this point of reference Protestants have inferred widely differing schemes concerning the nature of the Christian life. In seventeenth century England divines were attempting to define the relationship between God and man. Two answers were possible: "One manifested itself historically in the Calvinistic dogma of unconditional predestination, the other in the Socinian and Arminian conviction of man's intellectual independence."¹

Chillingworth stood uncompromisedly on the side of man's intellectual independence. It was, in fact, the pre-supposition behind all that he has to say about the Christian experience. Interjecting a comment on his own life, he says: "I for my part, unless I deceive my self, was, and still am so affected, as I have made profession, not willing, I confess, to take anything upon trust, and to believe it without asking my self why?"² He felt a positive need to "examine to the

¹Ernest C. Mossner, Bishop Butler and the Age of Reason, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1936), p. 13.

²William Chillingworth, Works, The Religion of Protestants, a Safe Way to Salvation, (tenth edition; London: 1742), p. 10, (preface 2).

Bottom all my Opinions of Divine Matters" ¹ Without complete freedom he held out no hope for his own salvation. ²

Chillingworth openly advocated this same method for others, even if it resulted in the destruction of faith, ³ or the multiplication of Christian sects. ⁴ Thus he moved beyond Hooker who was fearful that "full liberty of personal interpretation would lead to spiritual chaos" ⁵ Only one hundred years after the Reformation's beginnings, Chillingworth was already laying, in Protestant England, the seeds of a radical subjectivism. In spite of his words concerning the authority of the Bible, he put the ultimate authority in every human being.

The inescapability of making choices is obvious. Against Rome he held that even authority has to be accepted by individual men alone: "By the Consent of both Sides, every Man is to judge and choose." ⁶ The facts are:

We do make our selves Judges of Controversies, that is, we do make use of our own Understanding in the choice of our Religion. But this, if it be a Crime, is common

¹Ibid., p. 278, (v, 61).

²Ibid.

³Ibid., pp. 357-358, (vi, 72).

⁴Ibid., p. 281, (v, 72).

⁵W.K. Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1938), I, 231.

⁶Chillingworth, op. cit., p. 82, (ii, 11).

to us with you (as I have proved above),¹ and the Difference is, not that we are Chusers, and you are not Chusers, . . .²

. . . . So that, for ought I can see, Judges we are, and must be of all Sides, every one for himself . . .³

Chillingworth said that every man can find his way to the God that made him. He builds on the rational nature of man and the perspicuity of Holy Scripture:

Now in Matters of Religion, when the Question is, whether every Man be a fit Judge and Chooser for himself, we suppose Men honest, and such as understand the Difference between a Moment and Eternity. And such Men we conceive, will think it highly concerns them to be of the true Religion, but nothing at all that this or that Religion should be the true. And then we suppose that all necessary Points of Religion are plain and easy, and consequently every Man in this Cause to be a competent Judge for himself; because it concerns himself to judge right as much as his eternal Happiness is worth. And if through his own Default he judge amiss, he alone shall suffer for it.⁴

At the outset, experience becomes the key which will unlock all doors: men discover the truth only through their own personal experience of it.⁵ The rational man is blind to that which he does not obtain by rational means.⁶ Like the Socinians, Chillingworth stood on the personally experienced revelation of God.⁷ It is not damnable for a

¹Ibid., p. 113, (ii, 116). ²Ibid., p. 124, (ii, 153).

³Ibid., p. 126, (ii, 154). ⁴Ibid., p. 84, (ii, 16).

⁵Ibid., p. 61, (ii, 12). ⁶Ibid., p. 357, (vi, 72).

⁷Adolph Harnack, History of Dogma, trans. William M'Gilchrist, (Vol. XII of the Theological Translation Library. Edited by T.K. Cheyne and A.B. Bruce. London: Williams and Norgate, 1899), VII, 122.

man to deny even the truth of God if that truth is not

"known or sufficiently proposed"¹

In such Cases the Rule of the Law hath place, Idem est non esse & non apparere; not to be at all, and not to appear to me, is to me all one. If I had not come and spoken unto you (saith our Saviour) you had had no Sin.²

Nothing is to be esteemed a matter of faith which has not been made sufficiently clear to the understanding of all men.³

The Christian religion is thus based on the rational understanding of that faith by individuals.

Accordingly it is clear that Chillingworth takes a substantive and not a functional view of reason. If human judgment is denied, then "we are but Pictures of Men, and have the Definition of rational Creatures given us in vain."⁴

It may be fairly said that this Reason is not a separate faculty of man, but it is clear that Chillingworth regarded it as the constitutive factor in the make-up of man. It is this which makes man human.⁵ He does not speak of it as the imago dei but purely and simply as "common to all Men."⁶ Outside Christianity it is the only principle common to all men, and within Christianity it stands with the Bible

¹Chillingworth, op. cit., p. 38, (answer to preface, 8).

²Ibid. ³Ibid., pp. 38-39, (answer to preface, 10).

⁴Ibid., p. 352, (vi, 40). ⁵Ibid., p. 287, (v, 88).

⁶Ibid., p. 89, (ii, 30), footnote; p. 94, (ii, 51).

as the other common principle.¹ It is true also that both within and without Christianity it is considered as natural reason. Reason is autonomous for the man of faith just as for the man outside of faith. The only requirement is that men be equally engaged in the search for truth.²

For Chillingworth, reason has objective validity. He would have vehemently denied that its use could be controlled by a single individual: "Reason being a publick and certain Thing, and exposed to all Men's Trial and Examination."³ Men, he says, are only moved to action by rational causes:⁴ "It being indeed a plain Impossibility for any Man to submit his Reason but to Reason; for he that doth it to Authority, must of necessity think himself to have greater Reason to believe that Authority."⁵

This rational power in men, like the Holy Scriptures, is "the Gift of God."⁶ It is possible to summarize his thought in this way: Men who do not lean wholly on the Bible are not Christians, and men who do not follow the reason that is in them, but lean on others, are not rational men.⁷ Revelation and logical method are the firm bases of faith:

¹Ibid., p. 79, (ii, 3). ²Ibid., p. 185, (iii, 87).

³Ibid., p. 111, (ii, 110). ⁴Ibid., p. 84, (ii, 18).

⁵Ibid., p. 112, (ii, 114). ⁶Ibid., p. 354, (vi, 55).

⁷Ibid., p. 86, (ii, 25).

If you mean by Discourse, right Reason grounded on divine Revelation and common Notions written by God in the Hearts of all Men, and deducing, according to the never-failing Rules of Logick, consequent Deduction from them; if this be it which you mean by Discourse, it is very meet and reasonable and necessary, that Men, as in all their Actions, so especially in that of the greatest importance, the Choice of their Way to Happiness should be left unto it; and he that follows this in all his Opinions and Actions, and does not only seem to do so, follows always God.¹

However, this concept of the rational man is voiced against the infallibility of the Roman Catholic Church; Chillingworth did not either dare or intend to declare that man's rationality made him infallible. If he had done so, the argument would have served equally well for the Roman Church. Chillingworth, therefore, qualifies his argument by maintaining that men must be whole-heartedly engaged in the search for truth.² They must, in fact, put aside all questions of self-interest and weigh the motives for and against religion as in a perfect balance.³ Nevertheless, men may fail to arrive at a completely rational relationship with the truth. Their education, as in Chillingworth's own case, may lead them astray.⁴ It remains "the Condition of Men, . . . to be subject to Error" ⁵ Although "every Man in the World ought to judge for himself, what

¹Ibid., p. 15, (preface, 12). ²Ibid., p. 185, (iii, 87).

³Ibid., p. 58, (i, 8); pp. 9-10, (preface, 2); Lambeth Palace Library, Lambeth MS 943, p. 870.

⁴Ibid., p. 297, (v, 103). ⁵Ibid., p. 119, (ii, 138).

Religion is truest," he is not an infallible judge of that truth.¹ Men are, therefore, left with reason, but with no positive assurance that this reason may not fail them in their search for the true faith.

God, says Chillingworth, has entrusted men with independence and relies on the rational nature of man to accomplish his purpose. Even the Bible in no way limits the freedom of men.² Particularly in religion, all men must be allowed to use their own discretion.³ This discretionary freedom implies more than a freedom to do the will of God: Men are not to "cross the End of our Creation, which was to be glorified by our free Obedience; . . . The Law which he hath prescribed to himself in his dealing with Man; . . . is to set Life and Death before him, and leave him in the Hands of his own Counsel."⁴

For Chillingworth, the doctrine of free will means, primarily, that salvation is a matter of choice, not of chance. His criticism of the Roman system was that men were not able to make a rational choice of the way to salvation when their rational act may be nullified by some factor over which they have had no choice. The salvation of one man cannot depend on the true piety of any other man.

¹Ibid., p. 329, (vi, 13) ²Ibid., p. 118, (ii, 133-135).

³Ibid., p. 82, (ii, 11). ⁴Ibid., p. 105, (ii, 93).

The belief that intermediaries make faith an uncertain proposition is almost an axiom of Chillingworth's thought.¹

God, in any case, cannot force men to the right action without destroying the Christian faith.²

Free-will, in turn, depends on the rational nature of man. To his Jesuit opponent, Knott, he put the question: " [Is] it such a monstrous Absurdity, that Men in the Choice of their Religion should make use of their Reason? which yet, without all question, none but unreasonable Men can deny, to have been the chiefest End why Reason was given them."³ God does not accept the sacrifice of fools.⁴ This doctrine is not only taught by Brentius, Zanchius, and Cartwright,

But it is also taught by some others, whom you Knott little think of: It is taught by St. Paul, where he says, Try all Things; hold fast that which is good: It is taught by St. John, whether they be of God or no: It is taught by St. Peter, in these, Be ye ready to render a Reason of the Hope that is in you: Lastly, this very pernicious Doctrine is taught by our Saviour, in these Words, If the Blind lead the Blind, both shall fall into the Ditch; and, Why of your selves judge you not what is right? All which Speeches, if they do not advise Men to make use of their Reason for the Choice of their Religion, I must confess my self to understand nothing.⁵

Chillingworth also deduced an argument for the

¹Ibid., p. 97, (ii, 63-65). ²Ibid., p. 106, (ii, 96).

³Ibid., p. 115, (ii, 120). ⁴Ibid., p. 112, (ii, 113).

⁵Ibid., p. 113, (ii, 116).

rational autonomy of man from the silence of Scripture. He argued that God has not authorized any man to deal with men in God's place; it is only God that may command men, and other men must then accept them as they stand in that freedom.¹ Therefore God has left every man to his own liberty in interpreting Scripture.² The Scripture is sufficiently intelligible to every man who has "Understanding, whether he be Learned or Unlearned,"³ demonstrating the fact that, for Chillingworth, rationality is separable from learning.

Chillingworth sums up his doctrine of the rational autonomy of man with this Scripture text: "The heart of man knoweth no man, but the spirit of man which is in him." And therefore men believe what they know they believe.⁴ The submission of man to God is essentially reasonable. With this doctrine "the Middle Ages and the newer period stretch forth hands to each other across the Reformation."⁵

Thus Chillingworth, with a characteristically humanistic tendency, understood the religious life as a questing after truth in the spirit of the Seekers who arose

¹Ibid., p. 103, (ii, 85).

²Ibid., p. 109, (ii, 103).

³Ibid., p. 109, (ii, 104).

⁴Ibid., p. 93, (ii, 49).

⁵Harnack, op. cit., p. 120.

under Cromwell in England.¹ Chillingworth writes more than once of his own desire "to go the right Way to Eternal Happiness."²

The goal of the religious life is salvation, "Eternal Happiness." The process of the religious life is sanctification or movement toward salvation, "that which is the End of all these Ends."³ Salvation is very definitely postponed to the end of life.⁴

The argument of The Religion of Protestants is "that every Man, in Wisdom and Charity to himself, is to take the safest Way to his eternal Salvation."⁵ God has so ordered his world that this quest is a really free search. It is the pilgrimage of the Magi or the trek of Israel in the wilderness:

God gave the Wise Men a Star to lead them to Christ, but did not necessitate them to follow the Guidance of this Star; that was left to their Liberty. God gave the

¹Margaret L. Wiley, The Subtle Knot, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1952), p. 72; H. John McLachlan, Socinianism in Seventeenth Century England, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 84.

²Chillingworth, op. cit., p. 9, (preface, 2); cf. p. 220, (iv, 53).

³Ibid., p. 57, (i, 7).

⁴William Chillingworth, Works, Sermons, (ninth edition; London: 1742), p. 56, (IV, 18); p. 11, (I); Lambeth Palace Library, Lambeth MS, 943, p. 874.

⁵Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 367, (vii, 1).

Children of Israel a Fire to lead them by Night, and a Pillar of Cloud by Day; but he constrained no Man to follow them; that was left to their Liberty.¹

Man, then, is engaged in the pursuit of salvation in which he has perfect freedom given by God.

Chillingworth, in developing Christian doctrine for controversy, held out to himself the goal of a "Traveller's Indifference." His intention was to arrive at the destination, in his case the rational autonomy of men, without following

like a Sheep, every Shepherd that should take upon him to guide me; or every Flock, that should chance to go before me: but most apt and most willing to be led by Reason to any Way, or from it, and always submitting all other Reasons to this one, God hath said so, therefore it is true.²

Thus, he openly refused to follow Luther and Calvin systematically.³ Neither was he wont simply to oppose the Church of Rome:

Give me leave to complain to you of that Tyranny, which Custom, Partiality, or something worse, has laid upon our Understandings: And that is this, That wheresoever any former Protestant Writer hath suspected a Doctrine as not beneficial, but rather dangerous, to some Conclusion, which he is resolved to maintain against the Papists, we their Scholars are obliged to make good their Jealousies, and (may be) groundless Suspicions.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 105, (ii, 93). ²Ibid., p. 10, (preface, 2)

³Ibid., p. 23, (preface, 40).

⁴Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 59, (V, 33); cf., p. 83, (VII, 8).

Chillingworth's goal in doctrine, as in the Church, was comprehension, not exclusion. The Salvation of men is not dependent on correctness of doctrine.¹ Really true religion is not a closed system: "betweene two houses, whereof y^e one has the windowes all Shutt the other letts in y^e light on all sides."² He pleads that the way of Christ should not be made more narrow by unnecessary doctrine.³ He had nothing but contempt for those who fill "their Brains with notions that signify nothing, to the utter extermination of all Reason and Common Sense, and spend . . . an age in weaving and unweaving subtil Cobwebs, fitter to catch Flies than Souls"⁴

Chillingworth's doctrine of the rational autonomy of man is the important presupposition of his system. Therefore when he writes about the Christian faith he assigns primary importance to the idea of covenant, but not in its biblical meaning. For him the terms "new Covenant" and "gospel" are equivalent, and he uses them interchangeably.⁵ He reveals

¹Ibid., pp. 31, 33, (III, 11, 17); Religion of Protestants, p. 215, (iv, 46).

²Bodleian Library, Tanner MS 233, p. 31.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, pp. 183-184, (iii, 81).

⁴Ibid., p. 17, (preface, 19).

⁵Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 59, (V, 33); ibid., p. 83, (VII, 8).

his conception of the covenant, significantly enough, in his sermon on the text "For we through the Spirit wait for the Hope of Righteousness by Faith."¹

The new covenant, or gospel, is discovered in the light of the old ordinances.² Consequently, though he does not say so explicitly, he regarded the new covenant as a forensic document, or contract:

Which Covenant of Christ (called in Scripture the New Covenant, the Covenant of Grace, the Grace of God, the Law of Faith) according to the Nature of all Covenants, being made between two Parties (at the least) requires Conditions of both Sides to be performed³

"For unless there be pre-required Conditions on Man's Part to be performed, before God will proportion his Reward, the very Nature of a Covenant is destroyed."⁴ "And being a Covenant of Promise, the Conditions on Man's Part must necessarily go before, otherwise they are no Conditions at all. Now Man's Duty is comprehended by St. Paul in this Word Faith, and God's Promise in the Word Justification."⁵ As he says, there is difficulty in defining the meaning of the words faith and justification.⁶

The importance which Chillingworth gave to the legal

¹Ibid., pp. 93-112, (VII). The text is Galatians 5:5.

²Ibid., p. 93, (VIII, 2). ³Ibid., p. 102, (VIII, 30).

⁴Ibid., p. 107, (VIII, 44). ⁵Ibid., p. 102, (VIII, 30).

⁶Ibid.

aspects of the new covenant show that, throughout, he was facing the problem of man's response to God. This question is inherent in every theological system and is one of the most difficult points of the Christian faith to state in non-paradoxical language.

The new covenant is a pledge of grace by which God has radically altered the way for mankind. This new covenant is established on a new act, on new promises of God.¹ The compact that Christ made with God by his death means that, without obedience to the new law, which he established in his death, men could never become heirs to the everlasting glory.² But is the new covenant really new in Chillingworth's exposition of it? He states its divergence from the old covenant thus:

The law commands a precise, exact fulfilling of these Precepts which the Gospel, descending to our Infirmities, remits and qualifies much: For in the Gospel, he is accounted to fulfil the moral Precepts, that obeys them according to that Measure of Grace which God is pleased to allow him . . .³

Therefore the question must be asked, What did God in Christ do to alter the situation of mankind? The answer is that in Christ God acted without any other motive than the "Good and Happiness" of man:⁴ God has submitted

himself to the same Infirmities and Temptations with us, to this End, that by bettering and adding to that

¹Ibid., p. 99, (VIII, 21). ²Ibid., p. 102, (VIII, 29).

³Ibid., p. 104, (VIII, 35). ⁴Ibid., p. 50, (IV, 45).

Knowledge, which he had before of our Wants and Miseries, to wit, by perfecting and increasing his former speculative Knowledge by a new acquired experimental Knowledge, he might be better acquainted with what we want, and thereby more inclined to Mercy and Commiseration, and more powerful to succour us, being tempted.¹

God, for the sake of man, has enlarged three of his attributes:

1. His Omniscience, by knowing that personally and experimentally, which he did before only know contemplatively. 2. His Mercy, in that this his Knowledge doth more incite his Goodness. And, 3. His omnipotent Power: for (saith the Text) in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is (thereby) able to succour them which are tempted.²

In other words, God in Christ has acted exactly like Chillingworth's picture of the rational man.

The knowledge that God gained experimentally in Christ was human knowledge of the situation of mankind. Chillingworth held the conviction that Christ was fully human:

It was the Purpose and immutable Decree of God, that after the Fall and Misery of Man, whatsoever Good should befall us toward our Restitution and Repairing to our lost Happiness, should be conveyed unto us by our own Nature.³

He refused to defend the view of some Protestants that "Christ is a Mediator, secundum divinam naturam; which borders . . . upon an old dangerous Heresy."⁴ The heresy he appears to

¹Ibid., p. 50, (IV, 46). The text for this remark is Hebrews 2: 17-18.

²Ibid., p. 50, (IV, 47).

³Ibid., p. 60, (V, 36).

⁴Ibid., pp. 59-60, (V, 34).

be combatting is a revival of Nestorianism.¹ Christ's human nature "was the only Instrument, whereby our Salvation was to be wrought."² There can be no separation of the two natures of Christ.

Wherein did the work of Christ consist? Chillingworth does not single out the Cross, but concentrates rather more on the Empty Tomb than on any other aspect of the mighty act of God in Christ: "Easter being a Business, in the effecting whereof, above all the Works which God ever made since he began to work, he most especially glorified almost all his divine Attributes; it being a Deliverance, even of God himself, from Destruction and Rottenness."³

The resurrection expresses the "Glory of his Majesty and Power" and is vitally concerned with the "Safety and Happiness" of man.⁴ The text of his sermon is Rom. 8:34:

In which Words are comprehended the great Dependance and Combination which, our Non-condemnation or Salvation has, not only with the Death and Satisfaction of Christ, but also rather, even with Advantage, on his Resurrection. Now because they are so few, they cannot conveniently be divided, I will out of them raise this doctrinal Proposition, namely, That Christ's Resurrection and Exaltation is fully as necessary and effectual to procure and perfect our Salvation, if not more, than

¹Heinrich Heppe, Reformed Dogmatics, trans. G.T. Thomson, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1950), p. 419.

²Chillingworth, Sermons, pp. 61-62, (V, 42).

³Ibid., p. 53, (V, 1). ⁴Ibid., p. 53, (V, 4).

even the all-sufficient Sacrifice upon the Cross.¹

This proposition he further breaks down into a set of two that are even more central to his thought and position.

The first proposition is that

the Purpose of Christ, who satisfied for our Sins, and the Covenant which he made with God, who accepted of this Satisfaction, was not, that Remission of Sins should immediately ensue upon his Death, but only upon Performance of the Conditions of the new Covenant made in Christ's Blood, which are, unfeigned Repentance for Sin, and a serious Conversion unto God by Faith.²

Reason may lead a man to believe that Christ's death immediately affected the deliverance and salvation of men because such a prize may seem to be the only appropriate reward ensuing on the death of God himself.³ Chillingworth likens this rigorous pressing of the analogy of ransom to the sin of Judas: "To set our own Estimation and Value upon, to make a Bargain and Sale of Christ's Death; to set up a Kind of Shambles to sell his Flesh and Blood in."⁴ Likewise, "If we, . . . the Elect of God . . . be effectually reconciled to God, by virtue of Christ's Death, having obtained a full, perfect Remission of all our Sins, why are we frightened, or, to say truly, injured with new Covenants?"⁵ When men say they have obtained perfect

¹Ibid., p. 54, (V, 9). ²Ibid., pp. 54-55, (V, 10).

³Ibid., p. 55, (V, 11). ⁴Ibid., p. 55, (V, 12).

⁵Ibid., p. 57, (V, 23).

remission of sins, that the whole debt is cancelled, they say, in reality, that there is no new covenant: "For how is it possible to make these Things hold together? . . . All our Sins are already remitted, and that only for the Virtue of Christ's Satisfaction; and yet, unless we believe, our Sins shall never be forgiven us."¹ The gospel has no power today if all is made dependent upon a past act, an act which is complete and perfect.

Therefore, what men actually possess in the New Covenant is "a new Will or Testament made, wherein Christ hath bequeathed unto us many glorious Legacies, which we shall undoubtedly receive, when we shall have performed the Conditions, when we shall be found qualified so as he requires of us."² God, by virtue of Christ's death, is willing to receive men's efforts. Men are bound to new conditions, which "by the Help of his Spirit, which inwardly disposeth and co-operateth with us, [are] with Ease and Pleasure to be performed. Besides which, we have a Throne of Equity and Grace to appear before."³

It is clear from Chillingworth's view of the New Covenant that he sees the religious life as a quest with salvation at the end: the "Access to the Throne of Grace

¹Ibid., p. 57, (V, 24). ²Ibid., p. 56, (V, 19).

³Ibid., p. 57, (V, 20).

. . . is only for them which are sanctified."¹ Reconciliation is, therefore, considered "1. Either as it is applicabilis, not yet actually conferred; or, 2. as applicata, particularly sealed and confirmed to us by a lively Faith."²

Thus follows the second proposition, which states that Christ has enabled men to fulfill the conditions of the new Covenant:

That by the Dominion and Power of Christ, which at his Resurrection, and not before, he received, as a Reward of his great Humility; we are not only enabled to the Performance of the Conditions of this new Covenant, and, by Consequence, made capable of an actual Application of his Satisfaction; but also, by the same Power, we shall hereafter be raised up, and exalted to everlasting Happiness.³

The resurrection of Christ is more than an example of the way in which God will treat man. The resurrection is Christ's vindication of man's obedience to God.⁴ Christ now lives that man may live: "By the Influence and Power of his Life he undergoes, as it were, a second Incarnation, living and dwelling in our Hearts by his Grace, and reigning powerfully in our Souls by Faith."⁵

It is only after the resurrection, by means of which he enabled men to fulfill the conditions of obedience to God, that Christ sought his rightful dominion over men.⁶

¹Ibid., p. 57, (V, 21). ²Ibid., p. 56, (V, 19).

³Ibid., p. 55, (V, 10). ⁴Ibid., p. 59, (V, 29).

⁵Ibid., p. 63, (V, 49). ⁶Ibid., p. 59, (V, 31).

Now after the resurrection, his power and authority are universal:

at his Resurrection, he obtains the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth for his Possession And though the greatest Part of the World will acknowledge no Subjection to Christ's Kingdom, notwithstanding, this does not take away his Authority over them, no more than the Murmuring, and Rebellion of the Israelites did depose Moses their Governor.¹

The kingly office of Christ is not to be shared with any other person; no, not even with God himself.² Christ, who was raised from the dead and who reigns powerfully in the world, is the only hope of man. "Hath not St. Paul epitomized the whole Creed into that one Article, saying (in Rom. x. 9.) If thou shalt believe in thine Heart, that God raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, thou shalt be saved."³

The coming of the Holy Ghost also waits for the resurrection of Christ. It was not until Christ had achieved his office as king over all men that he could send the comfort-er as he had promised, and "effectually apply his Merits and Satisfaction"⁴ to the souls of men.

We find in Holy Scripture, that our Salvation is ascribed to all the three Persons of the blessed Trinity, though in several Respects: To the Father, who accepts of Christ's Satisfaction, and offereth Pardon of all our Sins; to the Son, who merited and procured Reconciliation for his elect faithful Servants;

¹Ibid., p. 61, (V, 39). ²Ibid., p. 64, (V, 53, 54).

³Ibid., p. 64, (V, 55). ⁴Ibid., p. 61, (V, 42).

and to the Holy Ghost the Comforter, who, being sent by the Son, worketh in us Power to perform the Conditions of the new Covenant, thereby qualifying us for receiving actual Remission of our Sins, and a Right to that glorious Inheritance purchased for us.¹

Chillingworth viewed the action of God in Christ, which culminated in the resurrection, to be an example of "the wonderful Mercy and Goodness of God; who, to do us Good, has given such Power to our Nature in Christ, to make a new Heaven, and a new Earth, to restore a new Generation of Creatures, ten Times more glorious and perfect than the first."² The universal action of God is done and now the work of Christ awaits completion in "a lively Faith."³ God in Christ has made it possible for men to respond to God; to fulfill the new covenant, or contract, that he has made with men.⁴

The work of God in Christ is embraced in the word justification. Justification must be discussed in non-paradoxical language,⁵ for "By these Means it comes to pass, that the Doctrine of our Justification, . . . is become as deep, as unsearchable a Mystery, as that of the Trinity."⁶ Chillingworth equated justification with salvation and both are to be realized only at the final judgment, when Christ himself shall be judge. Justification is "God's Promise, or

¹Ibid., p. 62, (V, 45). ²Ibid., p. 64, (V, 55).

³Ibid., p. 63, (V, 50). ⁴Ibid., p. 56, (V, 19).

⁵Ibid., p. 105, (VIII, 40). ⁶Ibid., p. 106, (VIII, 41).

the Condition, which God will make good unto us; and that is, the Hope of Righteousness, or Justification."¹ In another place it is defined thus: "Justification, even as it includes Remission of Sins, is that Promise, to perform which unto us God has obliged himself in the new Covenant."² Notwithstanding the work of Christ, Chillingworth continues to assign salvation on the basis of a response which is nothing less than a work of man for his own salvation:

So that, though God be the sole, proper, efficient Cause; and Christ, as Mediator, the sole, proper, meritorious Cause of our Justification; yet these inherent Dispositions are exacted on our Part, as causae sine quibus non, as necessary Conditions to be found in us, before God will perform this great Work, freely, and graciously towards us, and only for the Merits of Christ.³

He gives four reasons for interpreting the doctrine thus:

- (1) No one denies that good works are necessary to salvation; therefore, they may be considered necessary to remission of sins:
- (2) If there is no necessity of a predisposition in us before the remission of sins, then a man may be forgiven while he is yet unregenerated;
- (3) In several passages of Scripture⁴ justification is described not as a single virtue to be found in man but as the result of several virtues;
- (4) Paul and James are therefore reconciled without

¹Ibid., p. 94, (VIII, 4). ²Ibid., p. 106, (VIII, 43).

³Ibid.

⁴Matt. 12: 37 and 6: 14, 15; Luke 7: 47.

formulating any new doctrine of justification before men.¹ Hence, the requirements of the New Covenant are imposed upon man between the death of Christ and the actual remission of sins.² The duty of man is faith, and God's promise is justification.³ Justification is, then, a concept of promise, not deed, and is a purely legal term meaning that men shall be found "just" when they have that need; that is, at the Last Judgment.

The danger in Chillingworth's concept is that it makes justification depend too greatly on the response of man, and is thus finally dependent upon the work of individuals. In order to guard his doctrine, Chillingworth says that when St. Paul states as a proposition that "We are justified by Faith, without the Works of the Law" he is referring to the "proper, meritorious Cause of our Justification . . . And the Meaning of that Proposition must be, that we are not justified for the Merits of any Righteousness in ourselves, whether legal or evangelical, but only for the Obedience and Death of our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ."⁴

Even though Chillingworth did not wish to countenance the idea that justification is a reward for some meritorious

¹Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 107, (VIII, 44-46).

²Ibid., pp. 54-55, (V, 10). ³Ibid., p. 102, (VIII, 30).

⁴Ibid., p. 105, (VIII, 38, 39).

human activity, he yet supposed: "That St. Paul in that Proposition¹ had not a respect to the meritorious Cause of our Justification; but to that formal Condition required in us, before we be justified."² The condition required is faith: "The Apostle in many Places useth these Words, We are justified by Faith in Christ, and by the Faith of Jesus Christ; which Speeches of his will admit of no tolerable Sense, unless by Faith he intends some Work of Obedience performed by us."³ It is "taken for granted, that by Faith is meant some Condition required at our Hands."⁴ Very near the end of The Religion of Protestants, Chillingworth says that although the doctrine of justification by faith is "a Point of great Weight and Importance, if it be rightly understood, [men must still] preserve themselves in the right Temper of good Christians, which is a happy Mixture, and sweet Composition, of Confidence and Fear."⁵

I never knew [he says] any Protestant such a Solidian, but that he did believe these divine Truths; That he must make his Calling certain by good Works; that he must work out his Salvation with Fear and Trembling; and that while he does not so, he can have no well-grounded Hope of Salvation: I say, I never met with any who did not believe these divine

¹Gal. 2:16b.

²Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 105, (VIII, 39).

³Ibid., p. 106, (VIII, 42).

⁴Ibid.

⁵Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 382, (vii, 33).

Truths, and that with a more firm, and a more unshaken Assent, than he does, that himself is predestinate, and that he is justified by believing himself justified. I never met with any such, who if he saw there was a Necessity to do either, would not rather forego his Belief of these Doctrines, than the former.¹

For Chillingworth the Christian faith is response to God, and this response is more than confidence in the work of Christ. The Christian faith must be accepted or rejected, but rejection also means that faith is qualified by response. The requirement that God has attached to salvation is, for Chillingworth, the most important point in Christianity.

In the first place, Chillingworth accepts the idea that faith is rational response, because he thinks "no otherwise of the Nature of Faith, I mean Historical Faith, than generally both Protestants and Papists do; for, I conceive it An Assent to Divine Revelations upon the Authority of the Revealer."² Faith, in this purely formal sense, is the "Understanding Assent."³ This is the response of the rational man to the truth of God based on the statement, "God says so therefore it is true."⁴

However, the Christian faith is more than rational response to the items of revelation. The goal of the Christian faith is eternal life. Faith, allied with the

¹Ibid. ²Ibid., p. 58, (i, 7).

³Ibid., p. 92, (ii, 48).

⁴Ibid., p. 359, (vi, 51); cf., p. 355, (vi, 62).

Christian hope to overcome the world,¹ is legitimate self-interest; every man owes it to himself to take the safest way to his eternal salvation.² A man is to desire and pursue that which "he firmly beleieves best for himself."³ Hence, faith may be conceived by means of an analogy with the moral philosophers' conception of prudence:

For the Wisdom which is according to Godliness, doth most exactly answer to that Prudence which Moral Philosophers make a general over-ruling Virtue, to give Bounds and Limits to all our Actions, and to find out a Temper and Mean wherein we ought to walk: And therefore a most learned Divine of our Church, yet alive, knew very well what he said, when he defined our Faith to be a Spiritual Prudence; implying, that Faith bears the same Office and Sway in the Life and Practice of a Christian, as Prudence of a moral honest Man.⁴

Men are prudent when they assent to the truths of God.⁵ The God of the Christians has not revealed himself simply to satisfy the curiosity of men.⁶ Christianity is a way of life, so that a fool is "not opposed to a learned Man, but to a prudent Man; and therefore a worthy Doctor of our Church did well define Faith to be a Spiritual Prudence, that is, a Knowledge sought out only for Practice."⁷

¹Ibid., p. 325, (vi, 5). ²Ibid., p. 367, (vii, 1)

³Lambeth Palace Library, Lambeth MS, 943, pp. 864, 868.

⁴Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 20, (II, 28).

⁵Ibid., p. 21, (II, 31); cf., Religion of Protestants, p. 328, (vi. 9).

⁶Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 33, (III, 19).

⁷Ibid., p. 23, (II, 42).

Chillingworth gives only a hint of a more solid definition of faith when he refers to "Faith; not moral, but Christian: Which is, a relying upon Christ, as the only meritorious Cause of whatsoever Benefit we obtain by the new Covenant" ¹ However, his use of the concept of "meritorious cause" leads him again to show that men rely on Christ only upon the "Terms and Conditions proposed in the Gospel." ²

Chillingworth's intent was to hold together and mediate between the doctrines of justification by faith and the rational autonomy of man without the use of paradox. Unfortunately, he did not fully appreciate the first, nor see the results of the second doctrine. To arrive at his point he defines the meaning of a number of Pauline texts and then states:

Now these Senses of Faith, if they be applied to that Conclusion of St. Paul, We are justified by Faith, come all to one pass; for in effect it is all one, to say, We are justified by our Obedience or Righteousness of Faith, and to say, we are justified by the Gospel, which prescribes that Obedience: As on the contrary, to say, We are justified by the Law, or by Works prescribed by the Law, is all one. ³

Thus the way is opened for the working definition of faith which Chillingworth uses: faith is obedience.

The revelation of God in Christ makes insistent

¹Ibid., p. 104, (VIII, 37).

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 103, (VIII, 31).

claims on man; faith is the obedience to commands as separable from the acts of God. Chillingworth's own reasoning appears to be something like this: The new covenant makes it clear that there is some condition necessary to salvation; we are justified by faith; therefore, faith is the obedience to the conditions of the new covenant required for salvation. Are men then to say, "They believe themselves justified by Faith alone, and that by that Faith, whereby they believe themselves justified:"¹ as they are charged by the Jesuit? Chillingworth answers:

Some peradventure do so, but withal they believe, that that Faith which is alone, and unaccompanied with sincere and universal Obedience, is to be esteemed not Faith, but Presumption, and is at no Hand sufficient to Justification; . . . For my part, I do heartily wish, that by publick Authority it were so ordered, that no Man should ever preach or print this Doctrine, That Faith alone justifies, unless he joins this together with it, That universal Obedience is necessary to Salvation: And besides, that those Chapters of St. Paul, which intreat of Justification by Faith without the Works of the Law, were never read in the Church, but when the 13th Chap. of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, concerning the absolute Necessity of Charity, should be, to prevent Misprison, read together with them.²

This pietistic mood is very strong in the sermons of Chillingworth where faith is regarded not as one particular Christian virtue but as the sum of all Christian virtues.³

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 381, (vii, 32).

²Ibid., pp. 381-382, (vii, 32).

³Chillingworth, Sermons, pp. 102 and 107, (VIII, 31, 46).

For Chillingworth there is no such thing as a belief or a faith which is divorced from action. "Seeing the Hope of Salvation cannot be ungrounded, which requires and supposes Belief and Practice of all things absolutely necessary unto Salvation, and Repentance of those Sins and Errors which we fall into by humane Frailty."¹ Men are not to be required to believe secondary items, true though they might be, unless they are concerned with some vital Christian action. For instance, men are not required to believe the Scripture to be the word of God, but only to live as though it were.² Failures in conduct are just as destructive to salvation as errors in theology: "Certainly, a lewd Conversation is altogether as contradictory to holy Obedience, as a damnable Heresy to necessary Truth."³ The human response to God and his work is obedience in the form of a concrete performance of what God commands:

To be thankful to God, is not to say, God be praised, or, God be thanked, but to remember what he desires, and execute what he commands. To be thankful to God, is certainly to love him, and to love him is to keep his Commandments; so saith our Saviour, John xix. If ye love me, keep my Commandments. If we do so, we may justly pretend to Thankfulness; which, believe me, is not a Word, nor to be performed with Words: But if we do not so, as generally we do not, our Talk of Thankfulness is nothing else but mere Talk, and we

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 35, (answer to preface, 3).

²Ibid., p. 127, (ii, 159). ³Ibid., p. 215, (iv, 46).

accomplish St. Paul's Prophecy herein also; having a Form of Thankfulness, but not the Reality, nor the Power of it.¹

It is the work of Christ that has made faithful obedience possible and salvation comes only to the man who has persevered in the performance of the conditions imposed in the New Covenant.² The obedience of faith is the faithfulness of the man who concretely obeys the conditions of the New Covenant.

It is by faithfulness in the performance of actual duties that faith is known: "It is not then the Leaves of a fair Profession, no nor the Blossoms of good Purposes and Intentions, but the Fruit, the Fruit only, that can save us from the Fire; neither is it enough not to bear ill Fruit, unless we bring forth good."³ This fruit is absolutely necessary before men's admission into heaven,⁴ for men's belief is discerned "by the Fruits and Issues of it in the Practices of our Lives."⁵ By works Protestants make their calling certain.⁶ Faith and love are reciprocal; "Faith worketh by Charity, and Charity is the Effect of Faith."⁷

¹Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 3, (I).

²Ibid., p. 111, (VIII, 58); Lambeth MS, 943, p. 874.

³Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 11, (I).

⁴Ibid., p. 22, (II, 38). ⁵Ibid., p. 32, (III, 13).

⁶Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 381, (vii, 30).

⁷Ibid., p. 324, (vi, 4).

It is a calumny to say that Protestants believe themselves to be justified without, or, rather before, good works: even repentance is a work of man.¹

Shall the heathenish Moralist, merely out of the Strength of Natural Reason, conclude the Knowledge of what is good, and fit to be done, without a Practice of it upon our Affection, and outward Actions, to be nothing worth, nay, ridiculous and contemptible? And shall we, who have the Oracles of God, nay, the whole perfect Will of God, fully set down in the holy Scriptures, in every Page almost, whereof we find this urged and pressed upon us, That it know our Master's Will, without performing it, is fruitless unto us; nay, will intend the Heat, and add Virtue and Power to the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, reserved for such empty and unfruitfull Christians; And shall we, I say, content ourselves any longer with bare hearing and knowing of the Word, and no more?²

In yet another sermon Chillingworth maintains the necessity of good works. The text is, "Make to yourselves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting Habitations."³ This, he says, means that the goods of this world are to be used by men to obtain friends who will prepare the way to salvation by being advocates at the Master's court: "by the Assistance of our Riches (in the Expression of St. Paul) laying up for ourselves a Foundation of good Works against the Time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal Life."⁴ For, "if

¹Ibid., p. 381, (vii, 31).

²Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 22, (II, 37).

³Ibid., pp. 68-80 (VI); Luke 16:9.

⁴Ibid., p. 69, (VI, 5).

you be unprovided of Oil in your Lamps, of good Works, which may shine before Men" there is no hope and, "you shall be forced to remain exposed to all Dangers, to all manner of Misfortunes, not one shall be found to befriend you, and to receive you into everlasting Habitations."¹

Chillingworth viewed works as a necessity, but he did not hold the sub-Christian notion that men are rewarded according to their works.² Neither did he mean that God is in any way bound by the works of men, for human deeds remain human deeds:

When Protestants deny the Doctrine of Merits, . . . they mean nothing else, but with David, that their well-doing extendeth not, is not truly beneficial to God: with our Saviour when they have done all which they are commanded, they have done their duty only, and no courtesy God gives not Heaven but to those which do something for it, and so his Gift is also a Reward; but withal, that whatsoever they do is due unto God before-hand, and worth nothing to God, and worth nothing in respect of Heaven, and so Man's Work is no Merit, and God's Reward is still a Gift.³

Reliance on works gives to men a false security that hastens the day when they will be called to the final bar of justice with no further chance of repentance.⁴ Nevertheless, heaven is reserved for the sanctified:⁵

¹Ibid., p. 71, (VI, 12). ²Ibid., p. 69, (VI, 5).

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, pp. 210-211, (iv, 35).

⁴Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 65, (V, 60); p. 71, (VI, 12).

⁵Ibid., p. 57, (V, 21).

All the divine Writers of the New Testament, with one Consent, and with one Mouth, proclaim the Necessity of real Holiness, and labour together to disenchant us from this vain Fancy, That Men may be saved by sorrowing for their Sin, and intending to leave it, without effectual Conversion and Reformation of Life; which, it may well be feared, hath sent Thousands of Souls to Hell in a golden Dream of Heaven.

But is not this to preach Works, as the Papists do? No certainly, it is not; but to preach Works, as Christ and his Apostles do: It is to preach the Necessity of them, which no good Protestant, no good Christian, ever denied; but it is not to preach the Merit of them, which is the Error of the Papists.¹

The gospel does not deny the necessity of works, rather the gospel makes them an expression of a man's will to be saved. The gospel requires inward obedience, in contrast to both the old covenant and the law of the state:² The demand of the new covenant is that men should "seriously and truly endeavour to be perfect" ³

Faith, like works, is a response of the will of man. It is "living and effectual"⁴ obedience to the will of God. Therefore faith, for Chillingworth, is an intensely personal relationship with God. Thus he refuses to list an exact catalogue of the fundamentals of the Christian faith,

¹Ibid., p. 12, (I).

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 113, (11, 117).

³Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 12, (I).

⁴Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 59, (1, 9).

because God's work is not limited by man's creeds, but only by man's desire to know God.¹ It is possible "that they which never heard of Christ, may seek God; therefore it is true, that even they shall please him, and be rewarded by him"2 These men are brought to acknowledge Christ by God and then to salvation. This is

very manifest from the Apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where having first said, That without Faith, it is impossible to please God, he subjoins this Reason, For whosoever cometh unto God must believe that God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that seek him. Where, in my Opinion, this is plainly intimated, that this is the minimum quod sic, the lowest Degree of Faith, wherewith, in Men capable of Faith, God will be pleased; and that with this lowest Degree he will be pleased, where Means of rising higher are deficient.³

Faith belongs to the will because the response of men to God may be limited by factors such as age, physical and mental state, over which the individual has no control.⁴ These factors limit the necessary response to God to the barest essentials:

So those to whom Faith in Christ is sufficiently propounded, as necessary to Salvation, to them it is simply necessary and fundamental to believe in Christ, that is, to expect Remission of Sins and Salvation from him, upon the Performance of the Conditions he requires; among which Conditions one is, that we believe what he hath revealed, when it is sufficiently declared, to have been revealed by him: For by doing so, we set our Seal that God is true, and that Christ was sent by him. Now that may be sufficiently

¹Ibid., pp. 148-149, (iii, 13). ²Ibid., 148, (iii, 13).

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., cf., Luke 12:48.

declared to one (all Things considered,) which (all Things considered to another) is not sufficiently declared; and consequently that may be fundamental and necessary to one, which to another is not so.¹

Faith, the response that God requires of man on the basis of the new covenant, is the individual's will to be saved. God in Christ has made the conditions of this response such that a man can fulfill them regardless of his station or condition of life. Faith, as shown by the emphasis on its fruits, is the answer of the whole man to God; for faith begins in assent to truth, and culminates in the performance of the works owed by man to God. Therefore, in faith man responds to the claims of God upon his life. This response is acceptable to God so long as it is continuous all along the pilgrimage to eternal life: "For God requires no more of any Man to his Salvation, but his true Endeavour to be saved."²

How does a man come to this saving faith? For Chillingworth the answer is plain: he comes to it by his nature as a free, rational human being. A man may rely only on those things which are credible in themselves "and therefore fit to be rested on."³ To rest on anything else "is not rational, but meerly voluntary. I might as well rest upon the Judgment of the next Man I meet, or upon the Chance

¹Ibid., p. 149, (iii, 13). ²Ibid., p. 279, (v, 64).

³Ibid., p. 86, (ii, 25).

of a Lottery."¹ Men cannot make the necessary individual response to God unless they make it as rational persons. Reasons judged by the reason are the foundation of individual choices in religion.²

The faith of men cannot go beyond the motives which move men to faith. "An acquired, rational, discursive Faith, certainly these Reasons, which make the Object seem credible, must be the Cause of it; and consequently the Strength and Firmity of my Assent must rise and fall, together with the apparent Credibility of the Object."³ The word "faith" is not to be taken as synonomous with "knowledge" or "science": "for Faith is not Knowledge, no more than Three is Four, but eminently contained in it, so that he that knows, believes and something more, but he that believes, many times does not know, nay, if he doth barely and merely believe, he doth never know."⁴

Chillingworth maintained that men must be active in the pursuit of faith. Faith is neither infused into man nor drawn out of him by "any Physicall irresistable operation," for this would be inconsistent with the freedom that is man's, but rather man is drawn unto it, "Potenter sed suaviter as St. Austin, or with the cordes of a man as the

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 114, (ii, 118)

³Ibid., p. 327, (vi, 7).

⁴Ibid., p. 323, (vi, 2).

Scripture speakes and working so in, with, and by meanes
That the objects of our faith are hereby made Credibilian
nimis, exceedingly credible as the Psalmist speakes, or as
St. Paul of the cheefest of them _ By all meanes worthy of
beleef."¹

Hence Chillingworth speaks of a "firme Rational
Faith"² as the only faith valid for all men.³ One of his
arguments against the Church of Rome is that it requires men
"to yield a most certain Assent unto Things in human Reason
impossible," and this is "a likely way to make considering
Men scorn your Religion (and consequently all, if they know
no other) as requiring Things contradictory, and impossible
to be performed."⁴ "A contradictious Faith may very well
become a contradictious Religion."⁵ Not even the Bible
requires men to go beyond this rational understanding of
faith: for reason convinces men that the Bible is the Word
of God.⁶

The matter of faith must be "either naturally or
supernaturally evident."⁷ It is altogether impossible "That

¹Lambeth Palace Library, Lambeth MS, 943, pp. 863-864.

²Ibid., p. 864.

³Ibid.

⁴Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 13,
(preface, 8).

⁵Ibid., p. 327, (vi, 7). ⁶Ibid., p. 355, (vi, 62).

⁷Ibid., p. 326, (vi, 7).

Faith should be an absolute Knowledge of a Thing not absolutely known, an infallible Certainty of a Thing, which though it is in itself, yet is it not made appear to us to be, infallibly certain,"¹ as his Jesuit opponent maintained. Men are not required to believe anything which appears to be "incredible, and while it does so."² "Experience shews, and Reason confirms, that a firm Faith, though not so certain as Sense or Science, may be able to encounter and overcome our Will and Affections."³

Chillingworth defines the certainty that is due to faith as an evident fact that men are to believe the religion of Christ:

Though I deny that it is required of us to be certain in the highest Degree, infallibly certain of the Truth of the Things which we believe, for this were to know, and not believe, neither is it possible, unless our Evidence of it, be it natural or supernatural, were of the highest Degree; yet I deny not, but we ought to be, and may be infallibly certain that we are to believe the Religion of Christ. For first, this is most certain, that we are in all Things to do according to Wisdom and Reason, rather than against it. Secondly, this is as certain, that Wisdom and Reason require, that we should believe these Things, which are by many Degrees more credible and probable than the contrary. Thirdly, this is as certain, that to every Man, who considers impartially what great Things may be said for the Truth of Christianity, and what poor Things they are which may be said against it either for any other Religion, or for none at all, it cannot but appear by many Degrees more credible, that the Christian Religion is true than the

¹Ibid., p. 327, (vi, 7). ²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 325, (vi, 5).

contrary. And from these Premises, this Conclusion evidently follows, that it is infallibly certain, that we are firmly to believe the Truth of the Christian Religion.¹

The Christian faith is not infused into man by God in such a way that he may be infallibly certain of the truth of his faith.² What is demanded of men is a "firme Rationall Faith of this doctrine _ That obedience to the p'cepts of Christ is the true and onely way unto infinite and eternal happinesse"³ Disobedience to the way of faith is a distinct possibility; God cannot require the assent of faith unless such an assent is resistable.⁴

The obedience that is the second part of a saving faith may certainly come from an assent that is less than perfect:

So though all that are truly wise, (that is, wise for Eternity) will believe aright, yet many may believe aright, which are not wise. I could wish with all my Heart, as Moses did, That all the Lord's People could prophesy: That all that believe the true Religion were able (according to St. Peter's Injunction) to give a Reason of the Hope that is in them, a Reason why they hope for eternal Happiness by this way rather than any other! Neither do I think it any great Difficulty, that Men of ordinary Capacities, if they would give their Mind to it, might quickly be enabled to do it. But should I affirm, that all true Believers can do so I suppose it would be as much against Experience and Modesty, as it is against Truth and Charity, to say

¹Ibid., pp. 327-328, (vi, 8).

²Lambeth Palace Library, Lambeth MS, 943, p. 863.

³Ibid., p. 864.

⁴Ibid., p. 863.

. . . that they which cannot do so, either are not at all, or to no Purpose true Believers.¹

Even the true and saving faith is not "an indivisible point of Perfection" but rather is capable of "Augmentation and Diminution."² If faith were perfect then faith which works by love would be perfect, for "certainly if the Cause were perfect, the Effect would be perfect."³ From the absence of perfect love exhibited in believers, it may be argued that faith is not perfect, with the only possible conclusion: that man must seek to find perfection in the ultimate truth of the Christian religion, in "God the Eternal Truth."⁴

The sole assurance that man can have of the truth of his faith is a moral assurance. The word "Faith" agrees with the word "Opinion," in that opinion is an assent and not a scientific statement, which will admit of degrees.⁵ Chillingworth understands the mind of man to be like a balance into which the arguments and inducements for and against faith are placed:

The Presumptions and Probabilities, and Experiments and Reasons, w^{ch} are presented on one side and the other, are weights w^{ch} are putt in: An Understanding suspends

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 328, (vi, 10).

²Ibid., p. 324, (vi, 4). ³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 42, (answer to preface, 22).

⁵Ibid., p. 58, (i, 7).

betweene two opinions and inclining to neyther more than the other is a scale hanging in equipose and not turn'd eyther way: If it goe and come and settle on neyther side, it is like the Wavering Understanding, w^{ch} is inclined now to this side and now to that Beleeve is the turning of the scale: Constant beleeve is the settling of it; Morall certaynety by w^{ch} a man is assured a thing is so and never will be otherwise, is like a rising of the scale when it is downe, so that it can never gett up againe it being absolutely impossible that eyther a greater or an equall weight should be putt in on the other side. And as a greater weight, may overweigh many little ones, so one demonstration may beare down many presumptions.¹

All that is comprised in the command of God is this:

that though Men are unreasonable, God requires not any thing but Reason: They will not be pleased without a Down-Weight; but God is contented if the Scale be turned: They pretend that heavenly Things cannot be seen to any purpose, but by the Mid-day Light; but God will be satisfied, if we receive and Degree of Light which makes us leave the Works of Darkness, and walk as Children of the Light.²

The only metaphysically certain conviction of Christians is the thesis that "All which God reveals for Truth, is true." But of the hypothesis that "all the Articles of our Faith were revealed by God,"³ there is no more than moral assurance and trust, grounded in the greatness of Christianity above all other religions. Nevertheless man may not doubt, or call into question, those items of which they have moral assurance, without at the same time doubting the veracity of God. Thus

¹Lambeth Palace Library, Lambeth MS, 943, p. 870.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 58, (i. 8).

³Ibid.

moral assurance has absolute authority for the individual, although it is not capable of demonstration to another.¹

It is not possible that men may have a rational assurance beyond the moral certainty of the truth of their faith:

as a River will not rise higher than the Fountain from which it flows . . . Or, as if a Message be brought me from a Man of absolute Credit with me, but by a Messenger that is not so, my Confidence of the Truth of the Relation cannot but be rebated and lessened by my Diffidence in the Relator.²

But although man, by natural means, can be no more certain of his faith than he can be of the weaker of the premises on which it is built,³ he may have assurance which is greater than his natural ability. This assurance is personal and cannot be used in argument,⁴ but faith must be proportionate to it.⁵ The guarantee of

all true and lively faith, whatsoever the meanes and instruments be by w^{ch} it is produc'd in us, whither the sight of Miracles, or the efficacy of reasons, or the reverence for authority, is yet to be referred and ascrib'd to God and his spirit as the principal cause⁶

A rational faith may produce the obedience in man by which he shall be saved at the final judgement,⁷ for Christ accepts

¹Ibid., p. 150, (iii, 15-17). ²Ibid., p. 59, (i, 8).

³Ibid. ⁴Ibid., p. 150, (iii, 15-17).

⁵Ibid., p. 59, (i, 9).

⁶Lambeth Palace Library, Lambeth MS, 943, p. 863.

⁷Ibid., p. 864.

even an imperfect love and obedience where it is sincere.¹ To say otherwise would result in endless perplexities and require for each man a special revelation to end his doubts and fears.² The object of the Christian faith does not beget science, therefore certainty and obscurity must stand side by side in the Christian faith.³ But men have assurance "such as may be perfected and increased as long as they walk by Faith, and not by Sight."⁴ In support of this contention, Chillingworth quotes a passage from Grotius' of the Truth of Christian Religion, to the effect that the life of Christianity without any great miracles may be said to surpass any miracle.⁵

For the assurance of the truth of their faith, Christians have no more than the necessary evidence for that faith.⁶ In fact, a man does not need to be wise to have faith: "A Man may truly believe Truth, though upon insufficient Motives" ⁷ The true wisdom and prudence of faith is the state of the mind by which a man is prepared to follow the truth of God.⁸ Building upon experience,

¹Ibid., p. 865.

²Ibid.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 358, (vi, 50).

⁴Ibid., pp. 359-360, (vi, 51). ⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. 359, (vi, 51). ⁷Ibid., p. 360, (vi, 52).

⁸Ibid., p. 168, (iii, 52).

faith may be turned from belief (moral certainty) to knowledge (metaphysical certainty).¹ This is the direction that faith must take.

Chillingworth asserted the dynamic character of faith in opposition to the Roman doctrine of an infallible church which he thought made faith static. Therefore he insisted that God tolerated a wide latitude of individual belief.² In doing so, he laid extreme stress on the goodness of God.³ The condition that God has fixed for salvation is not rigid adherence to orthodox creedal statements, but an active response of man to God, that is an active endeavour "to know the Truth and obey it, and endeavouring to be free from Error" ⁴ The Bible is a guide book for man's response, pointing out "a Way so Plain, that Fools, unless they will, cannot err from it."⁵

Although the way is plain and the requirements simple, there is no guarantee that men will automatically find their way to salvation. There is a "difference between hav-

¹Chillingworth, Additional Discourses, p. 183.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 48, (answer to preface, 29).

³Ibid., p. 153, (iii, 24); p. 109, (ii, 104); p. 44, (answer to preface, 26).

⁴Ibid., p. 220, (iv, 53); cf., p. 279, (v, 64).

⁵Ibid., p. 220, (iv, 53).

ing certain Means to do a Thing, and the actual doing it."¹
 The ability of men to fulfill the demands of God varies "by reason of the variety of Tempers, Abilities, Educations and unavavoidable Prejudices, whereby Mens Understandings are variously formed and fashioned" ² Chillingworth felt himself compelled to take this stubborn fact into account in working out a doctrine of sin.

Chillingworth, however, does not have a doctrine of radical evil. Man, for him, is a sinner because he sins; he does not sin because he is a sinner. Therefore, true to his understanding of rational autonomy in man, he speaks of errors which belong only to the one man in question at any given moment. These errors are divided into two classes: those which "may be purely and simply involuntary," and those which are "in Respect of the Cause of it voluntary."³ This distinction between honest error and sin was one of the bases of his controversial attack upon the exclusivism of Rome. Lecky says that Chillingworth was almost the first man in England to teach the unorthodox doctrine of the absolute innocence of honest error.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 124, (ii, 152).

²Ibid., p. 43, (answer to preface, 26).

³Ibid., p. 167, (iii, 52).

⁴W. E. H. Lecky, History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe, (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1866), I, 447.

Honest errors are errors made, not against the truth of revelation, but against the content of revelation; they are not concerned with the truth of the sayings of God "or, whether he says this or no: But, supposing he says this, and says true, whether he means this or no."¹ Honest errors are those "which (as he conceived) God's Word, and his Reason (which is also in some sort God's Word) led him unto"² These are errors in such things

[which] an honest Man, whose Heart is right to God, and one that is a true Lover of God, and of his Truth, may, by reason of the Conflict of contrary Reasons on both Sides, very easily, and therefore excusably mistake, and embrace Error for Truth, and reject Truth for Error.³

Chillingworth saw that it is always men who interpret the revelation of God. If they are honest in their efforts to arrive at the truth, then it must always be presumed that they err on the safe side. When men interpret the revelation of God, they form opinions, and it is possible that all men may be wrong.⁴ But this does not mean they may not be saved. They have done something damnable, but the Christian faith provides an answer and an escape through the power of the gospel.⁵

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 43, (answer to preface, 26).

²Ibid., p. 45, (answer to preface, 26). ³Ibid.

⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid., pp. 39-40, (answer to preface, 10, 13).

Chillingworth found it impossible to view errors as abstract entities. All errors must only be considered "as they were qualified or maligned with good or bad Circumstances."¹

So that to consider Men of different Religions . . . in their own Nature, and without Circumstances, must be to consider them neither as having, nor as wanting Means of Instruction; neither as with Capacity, nor without it; neither with erroneous, nor yet with unerring Conscience. And then what Judgment can you pronounce of them, all the Goodness and Badness of an Action depending on the Circumstances.²

Ignorance corresponds to the complete absence of human concern, which Chillingworth advocated, in the making of the religious choice. Absence of human concern and ignorance both free men from the full consequences of their actions. "Ignorance of a Truth is supposed in Error against it, . . ."³ and it is further assumed that a man, by an act of his will, may remove all circumstances that are irrelevant to the choice that a man has to make for the good of his soul.

Consequently, ignorance is excusable unless it is voluntary or

unless you can plainly shew, that God hath declared, and

¹Ibid., p. 47, (answer to preface, 29).

²Ibid., p. 47, (answer to preface, 29).

³Ibid., p. 48, (answer to preface, 29).

that plainly and clearly, what was his Meaning in these Words: I say plainly and clearly; for he that speaks obscurely and ambiguously, and no where declares himself plainly, sure he hath no reason to be much offended if he be mistaken.¹

Men do not fail to come to salvation through ill fortune,² for "to say, that God will damn them for such Errors, who are Lovers of him, and Lovers of Truth, is to rob Man of his Comfort, and God of his Goodness; it is to make Man desperate, and God a Tyrant."³ Again, errors are not damnable if men are

but . . . desirous to know the Truth, and diligent in seeking it, and advise not at all with Flesh and Blood about the Choice of my Opinions, but only with God, and that Reason that he hath given me.⁴

The excuse of ignorance is justified by the "supposition that they do their best Endeavours to know God's Will and do it; which he that denies to be possible, knows not what he says; for he says in effect, that Men cannot do what they can do; for to do what a Man can do, is to do his best Endeavour."⁵ It is a rule of law that no man may be obliged to do the impossible.⁶

¹Ibid., p. 43, (answer to preface, 26).

²Ibid., p. 98, (ii, 68).

³Ibid., p. 43, (answer to preface, 26).

⁴Ibid., p. 167, (iii, 52).

⁵Ibid., p. 44, (answer to preface, 26).

⁶Ibid., p. 369, (vii, 7).

God is not to be considered as one who gives law in the same sense as does a State, where ignorance cannot be pleaded as an excuse before the court. Ignorance is not a matter of the will but the circumstance in which a man may find himself through no fault of his own; the "Effects of human Infirmary" ¹

God will not impute Errors to them as Sins, who use such a measure of Industry, in finding Truth, as human Prudence, and ordinary Discretion (their Abilities and Opportunities, their Distractions and Hindrances, and all other things considered) shall advise them unto ² In the mean while, if they suffer themselves neither to be betrayed into their Errors, nor kept in them by any Sin of their Will; if they do their best endeavour to free themselves from all Errors, and yet fail of it through human Frailty; so well am I perswaded of the Goodness of God, that if in me alone should meet a Confluence of all such Errors of all the Protestants in the World, that were thus qualified, I should not be so much afraid of them all, as I should be to ask pardon for them For, whereas that which you affright us with, of calling God's Veracity into question, is but a panick Fear, a Fault no Man thus qualified is or can be guilty of; to ask pardon of simple and purely involuntary Errors is tacitly to imply, that God is angry with us for them and that were to impute to him the strange Tyranny of requiring Brick, when he gives no Straw; of expecting to gather, where he strewed not; to reap, where he sowed not; of being offended with us for not doing what he knows we cannot do. ³

God is not the avenger but the perfecter: "God's Goodness (which will not suffer him to damn Men for not doing better

¹Ibid., p. 167, (iii, 52).

²Ibid., p. 44, (answer to preface, 26).

³Ibid., p. 44, (answer to preface, 26).

than their best) will supply all such Defects, as to human Endeavours were unavoidable."¹ It is a great absurdity to say that men may be damned when they do all that they can to please God and be saved.²

The argument that errors are not possible without ignorance and that God does not damn men for simple ignorance almost leads to a doctrine of universal salvation. However, God only remedies the defect in those cases where the defect was unavoidable, with the inference that men may remain ignorant by choice. There are errors which are certainly damnable "If the Cause of it be in some voluntary and avoidable Fault."³ When men confess a fault, they say that it was in their power to do otherwise.⁴ In particular, when a man, by an act of his will, betrays himself into "any Error contrary to any divine revealed Truth, that Error may be justly stiled a Sin, and consequently of itself to such a one damnable."⁵ God enters into judgment with men only for those faults which are truly avoidable.⁶

¹Ibid., p. 99, (ii, 68).

²Lambeth Palace Library, Lambeth MS, 943, p. 865.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 167 (iii, 52).

⁴Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 8, (I).

⁵Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 167, (iii, 52).

⁶Ibid., p. 151, (iii, 19).

The obligation of arriving at the truth of God is the individual liability of every man: those men may be justly condemned who have the power to believe and do not do it.¹ Any imperfection in God's scheme of salvation must rest with men. "For let Men but remember not to impute the Faults of Men but only to Men";² "shall we not tremble to impute that to God, which we would take in foul Scorn if it were imputed to our selves?"³ The faults of men are "Negligence in seeking the Truth . . . Unwillingness to find it . . . Pride . . . Obstinacy, by desiring that Religion should be true which suits best with my Ends, by Fear of Men's ill Opinion, or any other worldly Fear, or any other worldly Hope."⁴ A man may fall into damnable error by taking lightly his own responsibility toward the truth of God: to abide in error is very nearly the unpardonable sin.⁵ When a man has become convinced of an error by his conscience, he has ceased to believe that error, but he must also end his practice of these errors, "because otherwise he must profess what he believes not, and practise what he approves not,"⁶ which is damnable. Chillingworth carries this concept to its logical

¹Lambeth Palace Library, Lambeth MS, 943, p. 867.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 355, (vi, 47).

³Ibid., p. 110, (ii, 104). ⁴Ibid., p. 167, (iii, 52).

⁵Ibid., p. 279, (v, 64). ⁶Ibid., p. 298, (vi, 104).

conclusion:

It is damnable to maintain an Error against Conscience, though the Error in it self, and to him that believes it, be not damnable. Nay, the Profession not only of an Error, but even of a Truth, if not believed, when you think on it again, I believe you will confess to be a mortal Sin; unless you will say, Hypocrisy and Simulation in Religion is not so.¹

Yet these sins of the will do not remove a man from all hope of salvation for they are "pardonable, if discovered, upon a particular explicite Repentance; if not discovered, upon a general and implicite Repentance for all Sins known and unknown."² The rational man has the possibility of returning to the lively faith that is obedience, to the conditions of the new covenant. No error need be destructive to the salvation of the man who actively wills his salvation.

The doctrine of honest error is the culmination of Chillingworth's doctrine of man. It means that the Christian faith is appropriated by an act of the human will, but it also means that conscience is asserted as an autonomous entity. He has therefore been forced, consciously or unconsciously, to substitute faith in the goodness of God for the doctrine of justification by faith as asserted by radical Protestantism. Likewise, he has not taken evil seriously. Consequently, if the doctrine of honest error is taken logically, the result would be that one religion is as good as another.

¹Ibid., p. 41, (answer to preface, 21).

²Ibid., p. 45, (answer to preface, 26).

CHAPTER IV

THE CHURCH

Chillingworth should no doubt have written more directly about the nature of the Church than he did. As it is he wrote of the Church only indirectly. It was never his purpose to state or formulate a doctrine of the Church in explicit terms. Therefore his doctrine of the Church is diffuse and contains only those elements which he thought useful in combatting the errors of the Church of Rome. Nevertheless, he remains essentially true to the consensus of contemporary Anglican thought concerning the nature of the Church.¹

In the first place, Chillingworth's picture of the Church is almost wholly governed by the spatial metaphor. In almost every instance when he refers to the "Church", he is referring to the institutional Church which is limited in place and membership. Specifically, the Church is the "Society of Christians,"² a "Company,"³ or "aggregation"⁴

¹H. F. Woodhouse, The Doctrine of the Church in Anglican Theology (1547-1603), (London: Church Historical Society, 1954), pp. 169-184.

²William Chillingworth, Works, The Religion of Protestants, a Safe Way to Salvation, (tenth edition; London: 1742), p. 161, (iv, 39); cf. ibid., p. 57, (i, 5).

³Ibid., p. 287, (v, 88); p. 127, (ii, 158).

⁴Ibid., p. 120, (ii, 142); p. 156, (iii, 30).

of men, each of whom has chosen to belong to an individual Church.¹ In this manner Chillingworth took up the tendency of the Anglican Church to regard the Church catholic as made up of a number of distinct national churches.² He coupled this idea with his firm belief in the rational autonomy of man to the almost complete extinction of any belief in a real community of believers who are the body of Christ.

The individual humanity of the members of the Church proscribes all of the activity of the Church, which "can afford you no Help, but the Industry, Learning, and Wit of private Men"³ Membership in the Church in no way interferes with the free-will of men, and they remain open to passion and error.⁴ Chillingworth concludes that when one single member of the Church has free-will in believing and professing his belief, "it follows, that the whole Aggregate hath Free-will in believing."⁵ Thus he also concludes that the Church must not be deified because, if one member may be guilty of sins against knowledge and conscience, it follows that the whole Church may likewise be guilty of the same sins.⁶

¹Ibid., pp. 124-126, (ii, 154).

²Woodhouse, op. cit., p. 115.

³Chillingworth, op. cit., p. 127, (ii, 158).

⁴Ibid., p. 156, (iii, 30). ⁵Ibid., p. 158, (iii, 34).

⁶Ibid., p. 290, (v, 93).

This completely human Church does not maintain an unmitigated expression of the Christian faith. There is indeed no assurance that the Church will retain the whole deposit of Christ

entire and sincere, without adding to it, or taking from it; for this whole Depositum was committed to every particular Church, nay, to every particular Man which the Apostles converted. And yet no Man I think will say that there was any Certainty, that it should be kept whole and inviolate by every Man, and every Church.¹

When men maintain that God intended that there should be no error at all in the faith which they hold, they are driven to "this blasphemous absurdity"² that God has failed in his promises. Thus Chillingworth avers that the general experience of men in dealing with knowledge is determinative for the truths that the Church holds as its own peculiar possession.

The Church in the world is not in any case to be understood as a perfect manifestation of the true Church. No Church is "free from corruption, and conformable . . . to the Doctrine of Christ."³ This is true, not only of particular churches, but it may likewise be true of the Church catholic, which may hold a universal error.⁴ Men should remember that "there is a Difference between perpetual Visibility, and perpetual Purity,"⁵ so that they

¹Ibid., p. 123, (ii, 148). ²Ibid., p. 182, (iii, 80).

³Ibid., p. 263, (v, 13). ⁴Ibid., p. 56, (i, 4).

⁵Ibid., p. 147, (iii, 11).

do not "confound true and unspotted; and . . . put no Difference between a corrupted Church, and none at all. But what is this, but to make no difference between a diseased and a dead Man?"¹

Not only may the visible Church fail in its efforts to remain a pure Church, it may also disappear from the world altogether.² It is true that St. Augustine may have said that the Church could not disappear from the world, but if he were to return to the earth, experience would demonstrate to him that he had gone too far in combating the Donatists.³ It is by encouraging the misunderstanding of the Church that the Devil has done his work since the year 1000 A.D.⁴

Chillingworth's understanding of the visibility of the Church is analogous to his understanding of the Bible as a system of timeless, eternal truths. Both the Bible and the Church may be said to have disappeared when they are not recognizable, and yet both may be said to be present when they are in conformity with the ancient pattern of truth which begat them. Therefore, the truth of the Church is in its conformity to the ideal; it is not the

Failing of the Church from its Being, but only from its

¹Ibid., p. 331, (vi, 18). ²Ibid., p. 263, (v, 16).

³Ibid., p. 264, (v, 20).

⁴William Chillingworth, Works, Sermons, (ninth edition; London: 1742), pp. 17-18, (II, 14).

Visibility: Which if you conceive all one, then must you conceive that the Stars fail every Day, and the Sun every Night. Neither is it certain that the Doctrine of the Church's failing is repugnant to the Creed. For as the Truth of the Article of the Remission of Sins, depends not upon the actual remission of any Man's Sins, but upon God's readiness and resolution to forgive the Sins of all that believe and repent; . . . In like manner it is not certain that the Truth of the Article of the Catholick Church, depends upon the actual Existence of the Catholick Church; but rather the right that the Church of Christ, or rather (to speak properly) the Gospel of Christ hath to be universally believed. And therefore the Article may be true, tho' there were no Church in the World.¹

Notwithstanding the fact that the Church may err and cease to be visible, Chillingworth continues to write about the infallible Church in terms which show that he did not really believe that the Church might ever be actually invisible. However, this is not infallibility in the Roman sense; it is infallibility "in Fundamentals, but not in Superstructures."² The plain fact is "That the intire Truth of Christ, without any Mixture of Error, should be professed or believed in all Places at any Time, or in any Place at all Times, is not a Thing evident in Reason, neither have we any Revelation for it."³ The Church, like a man, is taught the truth "only sufficiently and not irresistibly" for otherwise there is no free-will in believing, and one of the premises upon which the Christian faith is

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 270, (v, 41).

²Ibid., p. 34, (answer to preface, 3).

³Ibid., p. 353, (vi, 55).

built crashes to the ground.¹

Infallibility is basically freedom from error. When Chillingworth says that the Church is infallible, he means that it has triumphed over error and is free and secure from error, but not "obnoxious to it."² This is the conditional infallibility, which he says is in accordance with the Thirty-nine Articles (Article XXI), and comes when the Church proceeds according to the twin rules of Scripture and tradition.³ Thus this "conditional" commission of the Church is not to be confused with absolute infallibility:

The Promise of Divine Assistance is two-fold, absolute or conditional. That there shall be by Divine Providence preserved in the World, to the World's End, such a Company of Christians, who hold all Things precisely and indispensably necessary to Salvation, and nothing inevitably destructive of it. This, and no more . . . God hath promised absolutely . . . [nevertheless] a farther Assistance is conditionally promised us, even such an Assistance as shall lead us, if we be not wanting to it and ourselves, into all, not only necessary, but very profitable Truth, and guard us from all, not only destructive, but also hurtful Errors.⁴

The Church may genuinely hope for complete triumph over all errors, but she cannot have a certainty that all she pronounces is the infallible truth of God. There is no

¹*Ibid.*, p. 178, (iii, 71); cf., p. 156, (iii, 30).

²*Ibid.*, p. 274, (v, 56).

³*Ibid.*, p. 129, (ii, 162); pp. 287-288, (v, 88).

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 277, (v, 61); cf. pp. 119-120, (ii, 139); p. 161, (iii, 39).

Reason, why any Church, even in this World, should despair of Victory over all Errors pernicious or noxious, provided she humbly and earnestly implore Divine Assistance, depend wholly upon it, and be not wanting to it. Though a Triumph over all Sin and Error, that is, Security that she neither doth nor can err, be rather to be desired than hoped for on Earth, being a Felicity reserved for Heaven.¹

Therefore, Chillingworth maintains that the Church need remain true only to the fundamentals of the faith. If a house is granted to be a house when it has all the parts necessary to a house, and the word fundamental means "all and only that which is necessary . . .," then it may be granted that men "may safely expect Salvation in a Church which hath all Things fundamental to Salvation."² This Church, which has always maintained the necessary fundamentals of the faith, has never, in fact, fallen from its visibility: "I believe our Saviour, ever since his Ascension, hath had in some place or other a Visible true Church on Earth; I mean a Company of Men, that professed at least so much Truth as was absolutely necessary for their Salvation."³

Although he says that the Church is a true Church accordingly as it is true to the fundamental truths of

¹Ibid., p. 278, (v, 62); cf., pp. 287-288, (v, 88); p. 159, (iii, 34).

²Ibid., p. 219, (iv, 52); cf., p. 41, (answer to preface, 20).

³Ibid., pp. 40-41, (answer to preface, 18); cf., p. 173, (iii, 58).

Christianity, he also maintained that the Church did not necessarily cease to be when it contained errors:

For that the true Church always shall be the Maintainer and Teacher of all necessary Truth, you know we grant, and most grant; for it is of the essence of the Church to be so; and any Company of Men were no more a Church without it, than any Thing can be a Man, and not be reasonable. But as a Man may still be a Man, though he want a hand or an eye, which yet are profitable Parts; so the Church may be still a Church, though it be defective in some profitable Truth. And as a Man may be a Man that hath some biles and botches in his body; so the Church may be the Church, though it may have many corruptions both in Doctrine and Practice.¹

The errors which do not destroy the Church are errors concerning non-fundamental points, and "the whole Church, much more particular Churches and private Men, may err in Points not fundamental."² Even the true Church may in some instances deny the full power of the Word: "it may sometimes add to this Revelation Things superfluous, nay, hurtful, nay, in themselves damnable, though not unpardonable; and sometimes take from it Things very expedient and profitable"³ The doctrine of honest error that Chillingworth applies to men, he also applies to the Church. Therefore, "not knowing absolutely all Truth, nay, not all profitable Truth, and being free from Error; but endeavouring to know the Truth and obey

¹Ibid., p. 182, (iii, 78); cf., p. 151, (iii, 21).

²Ibid., p. 128, (ii, 160); cf. pp. 164-166, (iii, 47-48); pp. 287-288, (v, 88).

³Ibid., p. 130, (ii, 164).

it, and endeavouring to be free from Error, is by this Way made the only Condition . . ."¹ necessary to the being of a Church.

The Church may hold error and superstitions when they are not destructive of the essence of a Church, but she ceases to be a Church when she holds "errors which were inevitably and unpardonably destructive of [salvation]."² When a Church holds a destructive error it has ceased to be a visible Church.³ The Church does not perish when it may err, but only when it "de facto doth maintain a damnable Heresy."⁴ The result of Chillingworth's doctrine is that it is only particular churches which can perish from the world.

The Church which does not hold errors that destroy the nature of the Church remains as a part of the true Church simply because it does not maintain any fundamental error. In Chillingworth's view it is this lack of fundamental error which should ensure the fellowship of the churches. The common loyalty of the churches to Christ is marked by the churches' willingness to be comprehensive. It is, of course, also his view that the truth will always come out victorious

¹Ibid., p. 220, (iv, 53).

²Ibid., p. 41, (answer to preface, 20).

³Ibid., p. 130, (ii, 164). ⁴Ibid., p. 332, (vi, 19).

in this comprehensive Church.

This conditional infallibility, unlike the absolute infallibility claimed by the Roman Church, is not settled in "some known Society of Christians, (as the Greek or the Roman, or some other Church) by adhering to which Guide, Men might be guided to believe aright in all Fundamentals."¹ This is so because there is no "visible Church of one Denomination, which cannot err in Points fundamental."² Here Chillingworth again likens the Church to a man, and

a Man that were destitute of all Means of communicating his Thoughts to others, might yet, in himself, and to himself, be infallible, but he could not be a Guide to others. A Man or a Church that were invisible, so that none could know how to repair to it for Direction, could not be an infallible Guide, and yet he might be in himself infallible.³

The Church may well possess this conditional infallibility and remain unknown or unrecognized as the true Church. What, then, are the marks of the true Church "(meaning by the Church, the Church of all Ages, and that Succession of Christians which takes in Christ himself and his Apostles)"?⁴

In the first place, Chillingworth concluded that universality, as men commonly define it, is not a mark of the true Church. To say that "the true Church is not always de facto universal . . . is a certain Truth known to all

¹Ibid., p. 161, (iii, 39). ²Ibid., p. 173, (iii, 60).

³Ibid., p. 161, (iii, 39). ⁴Ibid., p. 94, (ii, 54).

those that know the World, and what Religions possess far the greater Part of it."¹ A more radical test than a church's claim to universality must be devised, "for as for Universality of Right, or a Right to Universality, all Religions claim it, but only the true has it; and which has it cannot be determined, unless it be first determined which is the true."²

In the second place, Chillingworth dismisses the idea of succession as a perfectly valid mark of the true Church. Among his papers is a short manuscript titled "The absurdity of departing from the Church of England for want of Succession of visible professors in all Ages &c."³ In it he demonstrates that no Church can claim a perfect succession and that it is therefore impossible to justify the leaving of one church because of the claims of another church to true succession in all facts of Christian truth and practice. It is not necessary that the Church have a "perpetual Succession of Men orthodox in all Points"⁴ Neither can want of succession prove any man or church to be heretical.⁵ Again, he likens the Church to a man: "For Speech is a

¹Ibid., p. 330, (vi, 14). ²Ibid., p. 353, (vi, 42).

³Lambeth Palace Library, Lambeth MS 943, p. 927.

⁴Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 349, (vi. 38).

⁵Ibid., pp. 348-349, (vi, 38); p. 352, (vi, 41).

certain Sign of a living Man, yet Want of Speech is no sure Argument that he is dead; for he may be dumb, and yet living still; and we have other evident Tokens that he is so, as eating, drinking, breathing, moving."¹ Not only is it impossible to show a succession of orthodox believers who have always been in every point alike, but no one church can show "a Succession of Men that held with us in all Points of Doctrine"² For Chillingworth, it did not appear

that the Generation of Churches is univocal, that nothing but a Church can possibly beget a Church; nor that the present being of a true Church, depends necessarily upon the Perpetuity of a Church in all Ages, any more than the present being of Peripateticks or Stoicks depends upon a perpetual Pedigree of them.³

The true succession of the Church is a metaphysical, not a physical, reality: "the Connexions of essential Predicates with their Subjects are eternal, and depend not at all upon the actual Existence of the Thing defined."⁴ Therefore, he holds that the definition of a true Church does not depend on the actual existence of a church and much less upon the "continuance of it in perpetual Visibility and Purity"⁵ Some Protestants may then seek to prove a perpetual, visible Church, but they do this only out of courtesy and not because they hold it to be a necessary mark X

¹Ibid., p. 352, (vi, 41). ²Ibid., p. 353, (vi, 54).

³Ibid., p. 376, (vii, 20). ⁴Ibid., p. 265, (v, 22).

⁵Ibid.

of the true Church.¹

Neither do Protestants make "the true Preaching of the Word, and due Administration of the Sacraments, the notes of the visible Church, but only of a visible Church" ²

These marks show only that one particular church wants "nothing fundamental or necessary to salvation."³ Of these marks of the Church, it can only be said that

they are so far inseparable, that wheresoever they are, there a Church is: But not so, that in some cases there may be a Church, where these notes are not. Again, these notes will make the Church visible: But to whom? Certainly not to all men, nor to most men: But to them only to whom the Word is preached, and the Sacraments administered. They make the Church visible, to whom themselves are visible, but not to others . . . [visible] to them only, who are present at these Performances, and to others as secret, as if they had never been performed.⁴

If these outward signs of the true Church are all rejected as inconclusive, how is the Church recognized by men? Chillingworth denied all claims of the institutional church:

There being no certain way to know that any Company is a true Church, but only by their professing the true Doctrine of Christ. And therefore as it is impossible that I should know that such a Company of Philosophers are Peripateticks, or Stoicks; unless I should first know what was the Doctrine of the Peripateticks, and Stoicks; so it is as impossible that I should certainly know any Company to be the Church of Christ, before I

¹Ibid., p. 40, (answer to preface, 14).

²Ibid., p. 266, (v, 26). ³Ibid., p. 267, (v, 26).

⁴Ibid., p. 264, (v, 19).

know what is the Doctrine of Christ, the Profession whereof constitutes the visible Church, the Belief and Obedience of the invisible . . . that by the Fore-knowledge of the Doctrine of Christ, he must be directed to a certain Assurance, which is the Catholick Church, if he mean not to chuse at a venture, but desire to have certain Direction to it.¹

The recognition of the Church therefore depends on an authority altogether external to that Church. The rational man must judge for himself, and thus the rule by which he judges is the all important confirmation of the truth of his choice. The straightness of a thing may only be known by the straightness of the rule by which it is measured;² such a rule must be applied to the Church as a test.

That rule is the Bible. Holy Scripture is the "first Principle in Christianity" . . . Scripture is a Principle among Christians, that is, so received by all, that it need not be proved in any emergent Controversy to any Christian, but may be taken for granted"³ It is this undoubted rule that men must apply to the Church, for they cannot accept the Church on the word of others:

seeing Men may deceive, and be deceived, and their Words are no Demonstrations, how shall he be assured, that what they say is true? So that at the first he meets with an impregnable Difficulty, and cannot know the Church by such Notes, which whether they be the Notes of the Church he cannot possibly know. But let us suppose this Isthmus digged through, and that he is

¹Ibid., pp. 220-221, (iv, 53). ²Ibid., p. 156, (iii, 30).

³Ibid., p. 94, (ii, 51); cf., p. 94, (ii, 52).

assured, these are the Notes of the true Church: How can he possibly be a competent Judge, which Society of Christians hath Title to these Note, and which hath not? seeing this Trial of necessity requires a great Sufficiency of Knowledge of the Monuments of Christian Antiquity, which no unlearned Man can have, because he that hath it cannot be unlearned And whether this be not a more difficult Work, than to stay at the first Age, and to examine the Church by the Conformity of her Doctrine with the Doctrine of the first Age, every Man of ordinary Understanding may judge.¹

Therefore the present Church must stand in a well defined relationship to the Bible and the doctrine of the Apostolic Church. It has already been shown that Chillingworth emphatically rejects the authority of the Church in favour of the authority of the Word of God. How, then, does he view the Holy Scriptures from within the Church?

Chillingworth's conception of the Bible as the first principle and foundation of the Church is maintained in the Scriptures' freedom from the power of the Church. It is in God's power alone to insure the purity of the Bible; otherwise, all assurance of its purity would have been long lost.² Likewise, the individual church accepts a given set of books which make up the Bible. It is not in the authority of any Church to determine the canon for its own use. The canon is accepted "upon the Credibility of Universal Tradition, which is a Thing credible of it self, and therefore fit to

¹Ibid., pp. 110-111, (ii, 108).

²Ibid., pp. 85-86, (ii, 24).

be rested on" ¹ Because of its freedom from the authority of the Church, the Bible provides a rational basis for faith. ²

The Church has neither any power over the Bible nor has it power to make anything which is not expressly contained in the Bible compulsory in the belief of Christians. No new revelation was allowed to the Church after the death of Christ and his disciples. ³ The only tradition for which the Church may require belief is "nothing else, but the very same that is written; nothing but to believe in Christ." ⁴ For "to them that have Scripture and believe it, Tradition is unnecessary." ⁵

In a Word that all Things necessary to be believed are evidently contained in Scripture, and what is not there evidently contained, cannot be necessary to be believed. And our Reason hereof is convincing, because nothing can challenge our Belief, but what hath descended to us from Christ by original and universal Tradition. Now nothing but Scripture hath thus descended to us, therefore nothing but Scripture can challenge our Belief. ⁶

Men, as rational beings, are sent only to the Holy Scripture: the Church exists to point to a truth outside itself, and this truth is the Bible.

The Scripture is true in all Things; but the Scripture says, that these only Points are the Fundamentals of the

¹Ibid., p. 86, (ii, 25). ²Ibid., p. 354, (vi, 56).

³Ibid., pp. 154-155, (iii, 28). ⁴Ibid., p. 122, (ii, 144).

⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid., p. 126, (ii, 156).

Christian Religion; therefore it is true, that these only are so. So that the Knowledge of Fundamentals being itself drawn from Scripture . . . can have no Foundation, but the universal Truth of Scripture. For, to be a fundamental Truth, presupposes to be a Truth; now I cannot know any Doctrine to be a divine and supernatural Truth, or a true Part of Christianity, but only because the Scripture says so, which is all true¹

"An Authority subject to Error can be no firm or stable Foundation of my Belief in any Thing . . ." because, if this unstable base is once allowed, it must either be believed in everything that it says or denied in everything.² Therefore, he says of the Church: "We could not rationally believe her for her own Sake, and upon her own Word and Authority in any Thing"³

Outside of the Church, Chillingworth says that the Bible may not be forced on those who do not accept it as truth. If a man were an atheist, he could not possibly grant the Bible to be the Word of God; for if he did make such an admission, he would not be an atheist.⁴

So likewise, if I had a Controversy about the Truth of Christ with a Jew, it would be vainly done of me, should I press him with the Authority of the New Testament, which he believes not, till out of some Principles common to us both, I had perswaded him that it is the Word of God . . . in as much as that which is doubted of it self, is not fit to determine other Doubts.⁵

¹Ibid., p. 160, (iii, 37). ²Ibid., p. 160, (iii, 36).

³Ibid.; cf., pp. 160-161, (iii, 38).

⁴Ibid., p. 126, (ii, 156). ⁵Ibid.

In this passage the operative phrase is "till out of some principles common to us both." Chillingworth believed that the Church must approach men where they are, in its missionary task. Thus the Church approaches men as rational creatures and attempts to get those outside the faith to make the same rational assent to God's truth as those inside the faith have already made. Evangelism would then be an intensely personal task.

He recognizes that the Church must always begin with the individual. It is the Church's task to approach men because it can be done by no other organization; "seeing Faith comes by hearing, and by hearing those who give Testimony to it, which none doth but the Church and the parts of it So then, the Church is, though not a certain Foundation and Proof of my Faith, [is] yet a necessary Introduction to it."¹ Yet the revealed truths of God are conveyed to men only by the Holy Scripture, not by the Church.²

In this discussion the real relationship between the Bible and the Church emerges in Chillingworth's thought. There can be no question of any source for the truths of Christianity other than the Bible, for "we either learn from

¹Ibid., pp. 160-161, (111, 38).

²Ibid., p. 22, (preface, 32).

Scripture immediately, or learn of those that learn it of Scripture; so that neither the Learned nor Unlearned pretend to know these Things independently of Scripture."¹ Men are to consult only the Bible for their direction to Heaven.²

"Neither yet is this to drive any Man to Desparation: Unless it be such an one, as hath such a strong Affection to this Word Church, that he will not go to Heaven, unless he hath a Church to lead him thither."³

In order to demonstrate the relationship between the Church, the believer, and the Scripture, Chillingworth speaks of two churches. He tells his Jesuit opponent that

if you will argue thus: The Church in one Sense tells us what is Scripture, and we believe; therefore, if the Church taken in another Sense, tells us, This or that is the Meaning of the Scripture, we are to believe that also; this is too transparent Sophistry, to take any but those that are willing to be taken.⁴

The cleavage between the "Church of all Ages since the Apostles"⁵ and the "Authority of the present Church"⁶ is too deep to allow the present Church alone to declare the meaning of Scripture. God has given the Bible to the Church, but he has left the interpretation of its truth and the obedience to its

¹Ibid., p. 167, (iii, 50).

²Ibid., pp. 221-222, (iv, 55).

³Ibid., p. 222, (iv, 56). ⁴Ibid., p. 104, (ii, 88).

⁵Ibid., p. 103, (ii, 88). ⁶Ibid., p. 104, (ii, 89).

teachings to individuals.¹

Therefore the Church depends on Scripture. The Church may, by preserving the Holy Scripture, retain the means of raising a true church even out of a presently heretical church. The task of the Church in the world is to maintain "the Integrity and the Authority of the Word of God with Men."² The Church, as Hooker says, is "ordinarily the first Introduction and probable Motive to the Belief of the Verity" of the Bible.³ That is, men "may learn of the Church, that the Scripture is the Word of God, and from the Scripture . . ." they learn the content of their faith.⁴ In a sermon he put it this way: "Let our holy Mother the Church persuade you . . . to receive God's Promises in such wise, as they are generally set forth to us in holy Scriptures."⁵

The function of the Church, as it regards the Bible, is to bring men to the Bible, or to bring the Bible to men. This is the meaning of Christ's commission to the Church:

Our Saviour sending his Apostles to preach, gave them no other Commission than this, Go teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all Things, whatsoever I have commanded you. These were the Bounds

¹Ibid., pp. 104-105, (ii, 93).

²Ibid., p. 376, (vii, 20); cf., p. 161, (iii, 40).

³Ibid., p. 88, (ii, 30). ⁴Ibid., p. 161, (iii, 40).

⁵Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 65, (V, 58).

of their Commission.¹

No Church has a greater mission than this, to make known the Word of God, nor has any Church a lesser mission, for if it fails to propose as much of God's truth as is indispensably necessary to bring men to salvation, it fails to be a Church at all.²

The Church's dependence on Scripture severely limits the Church's authority over men. It has not been left to the Church to name the bounds of its authority: "God can better inform us, what are the Limits of the Church's Power, than the Church herself . . . , we oppose against them, no human decisive Judges, nor any Sect or Person, but only God and his Word."³ Christians are obliged to obey the Church only in those things that God does not countermand.⁴ The authority of the Church is plainly limited to "Cases of Uncertainty."⁵ That is, to "such Matters, as have plain Scripture or Reason neither for them, nor against them, and wherein Men are persuaded this way or that way, upon their own only probable Collection"⁶

There is no organization of men in the world which has any power to coerce men to belief except such a society

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, pp. 211-212, (iv, 38).

²Ibid., p. 130, (ii, 164). ³Ibid., p. 174, (iii, 62).

⁴Ibid., p. 34, (answer to preface, 3).

⁵Ibid., p. 303, (v, 110). ⁶Ibid., p. 302, (v, 110).

as has been authorized thereto by God; but, says Chillingworth, "we are able to demonstrate, that it hath not been the Pleasure of God to give to any Man, or Society of Men, any such Authority."¹ Such an organization would be a great convenience, but the desire must not be taken for the fact and the Church must make its way without any authority over men.² Even without authority in the Church, men may still distinguish between truth and falsehood.³ Chillingworth's statement of this position has been cited to demonstrate the biblical freedom that the Church of England has always claimed.⁴ He says, "Call no Man Master on Earth, but according to Christ's Command, . . . rely upon the Direction of God himself."⁵

The complete denial of ecclesiastical authority is also deduced from the silence of Scripture. Chillingworth says that, "For Commands to seek the Church, I have not yet met with any"⁶ Has God, he asks, appointed a judge and then not told men what or whom that judge is to be?⁷

¹Ibid., p. 103, (ii, 85).

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 128, (ii, 160-161).

⁴Alan Richardson and Wolfgang Schweitzer, eds. Biblical Authority for Today, (London: S.C.M. Press, 1951), p. 113.

⁵Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 220, (iv, 53).

⁶Ibid., p. 161, (iii, 41) ⁷Ibid., p. 103, (ii, 85).

If men had been sent to the Church, the Apostles need have left no other creedal statement.¹ The Church, if it expects men to bow to its authority, must show some higher authority which commands this obeisance.² Men are to obey only those truths which are evident in themselves, but there is no evidence for the authority of the Church, therefore the Church has no authority.³

If the essence and authority of the Church is described and circumscribed by its delivery of the Word of God to men, what then was Chillingworth's understanding of the Church's place in the scheme of salvation? This understanding must be governed by the idea that salvation is a process in life and that men are traveling a road toward eternal life. The Church delivers the Bible as a system of timeless, eternal truths for men to follow and this church may not be forsaken:

neither universal nor particular Church, so long as they continue so, may be forsaken . . . no more than Christ himself may be forsaken absolutely: For the Church is the Body of Christ, and whosoever forsakes either the Body, or his Coherence to any Part of it, must forsake his Subordination, and Relation to the Head. Therefore whosoever forsake the Church, or any Christian, must forsake Christ himself.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 229, (iv, 81); p. 228, (iv, 77).

²Ibid., p. 123, (ii, 149).

³William Chillingworth, Works, Additional Discourses, (fifth edition; London: 1742), p. 165.

⁴Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 176, (iii, 66); cf., p. 176, (iii, 67).

Nevertheless the full force of this statement is not acted upon. Chillingworth is too much of an individualist to picture salvation as part of a community life and only within such a life. Obedience to the Church is not to be placed among the items to which men must assent for their salvation.¹ Chillingworth is careful to state that the Church must not be interposed between God and man in such a way that a man then has no access to God except through the Church and its sacraments. Confession and repentance is effectual when made to God alone. Infants are not damned because the Church, through some fault of its own, has failed to baptize them; God will supply the defect of any human baptism.² Neither can the Church perform in an instant those acts for the salvation of man which it may take the individual a life time to work out for himself.³ Thus it is seen that while salvation is not to be found except in obedience to the truths to which the Church alone points, it is not open to the Church to pervert the Christian religion by making the Church the dispenser of salvation, so that none may have it without the action of the Church.

Do not confuse, says Chillingworth, "departing from

¹Ibid., p. 210, (iv, 33).

²Ibid., pp. 368-370, (vii, 7).

³Ibid., pp. 370-371, (vii, 8); cf., p. 270, (v, 41).

the Church (i.e. ceasing to be a Member of it) with departing from the Church's external Communion"1 Do

Protestants hold

that every Man for all the affairs of his soul must have recourse to some Congregation? If some one Christian lived alone among Pagans in some Country, remote from Christendom, shall we conceive it impossible for this man to be saved, because he cannot have recourse to any Congregation, for the Affairs of his Soul? Will it not be sufficient for such an one's salvation, to know the doctrine of Christ, and live according to it?²

When the emphasis is on obedience, as it is in Chillingworth, then it is easy to see that leaving one congregation is not the same as departing from the Church "absolutely and totally."³

Chillingworth's constant concern is for a Church that respects the rational nature of man, not only by appealing to that nature for conversion, but also by allowing the individual to make a final appeal to his own conscience in every case. Therefore, he did not expend much effort in relating the idea that salvation must be in a community, an idea which is emphasized by the more radical Protestants of all eras.⁴ His stress is on the individual reaction to the truth of God, and salvation comes from within the Church only as the Church makes

¹Ibid., p. 273, (v, 54); cf., p. 271, (v, 45); p. 147, (iii, 11).

²Ibid., p. 263, (v, 17).

³Ibid., p. 176, (iii, 67).

⁴J. Robert Nelson, The Realm of Redemption, (London: The Epworth Press, 1951), pp. 60-66, 184.

known the truth of God. He was influenced in this more by the philosophical tenets of rationalism than by the Protestant ideal of justification by faith.¹

Salvation is found, then, not within a concrete historical situation but in a universal form which shares the truth with men. Men may depart from the historical manifestation of the Church, but they may not depart from the universal form. This being the case, it is not odd to find that Chillingworth expresses no deep concern for the polity of the Church. Matters of order are not important for faith although they must not hinder faith. Men are not to leave the concrete, particularized church because of corruption in manners.²

Chillingworth did attack the Roman practice of the Latin service, because it does not reach rational men. The service must edify, since the services of the Church are its tools for reaching the thinking man. The command of Christ is that the people should know, in order that they might follow him:

Indeed, who can doubt, that hath not his eyes veiled with Prejudice, that God hath taught . . . plain enough in the Epistle to the Corinthians, that all things in the

¹Ibid., p. 174.

²Chillingworth, The Religion of Protestants, p. 275, (v, 57).

Church are to be done for edification¹

Any irrational course is only laying hay and stubble on the foundation of the Church.² The people should be encouraged to read the Bible. Instead of this the Church has charged men with heresy for reading it.³ Likewise, the people should be encouraged to make their own prayers after the example of the priests.⁴ God has left it to the Church to determine the particulars of the service --time, place, manner-- but he has not left it to her to determine what they are to believe.⁵ The responsibility of the Church is to bring the Bible to the people and to obey that Bible themselves in all that is done in the public service of God.⁶ Chillingworth conceived the service of the Church to be not unlike the function of the Bible, which is to bring men to obedience to the law of Christ whereby they might be saved. The lack of a vernacular service may cause some men to be damned who might otherwise be saved.⁷

¹Ibid., p. 178, (iii, 71); cf., p. 36, (answer to preface, 7).

²Ibid., p. 152, (iii, 21).

³Bodleian Library, Bodleian Tanner MS 233, p. 31.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 120, (ii, 142).

⁶Ibid., pp. 78-79, (ii, 1).

⁷Ibid., p. 36, (answer to preface, 7).

Chillingworth does not pay much attention to the problem of a ministry. Again, he only criticizes the Roman view of ordination and indicates that he had a radically different view than they. He did not believe that physical succession was a part of the act.¹ Nothing in the faith of a Christian man depends on the ordination of a minister:

So that when you have done as much as God requires for your Salvation, yet you can by no Means be secure, but that you may have the ill Luck to be damned; which is to make Salvation a Matter of Chance, not of Choice; and which a Man may fail of, not only by an ill Life, but by ill Fortune.²

Priests, after their ordinations, remain men "in whom nothing is more certain than a most certain Possibility to err."³ Thus, concerning the ordination of the Church of England he says, "Experience shews them [the priests] certainly to be sufficient to bring Men to Faith and Repentance, and consequently to Salvation; and that if there were any secret Defect of any thing necessary, which we cannot help, God will certainly supply it."⁴ In this he remains consistent with his view that religion is the communication of disembodied truth and, consequently, echoes his belief that

¹Ibid., pp. 97-99, (ii, 62-68).

²Ibid., p. 98, (ii, 68). ³Ibid., p. 100, (ii, 71).

⁴Ibid., p. 374, (vii, 15).

the truth of the Church is not dependent on succession.

With regard to the sacraments, Chillingworth takes the same line of thought. God is not tied to the sacraments of the Church.¹ "Baptism is not a Matter of Faith, but Practice: Not so much to be believed, as to be given, and received."² In his only definition of baptism, he indicates that it is a vow made by the believer to live the life of Christian obedience. This is so even in infancy when men are "dedicated and devoted to God's Service, by our Parents and the Church, as young Samuel was by his Mother Hannah"³ The absence of such a dedication will be made good by God if need be,⁴ and it is consequently not a problem worth worrying about.⁵ Chillingworth nowhere touches upon the question of the Lord's Supper, but he must have regarded it in much the same manner as baptism. That is, that the truth of a man's faith depends not so much upon the correct observance of forms by the Church as on the man's relationship of obedience to God alone.

In the question of absolution, Chillingworth intimates his sympathy with the high-churchmen. He maintained that the Church of England had gone too far in attempting to rid them-

¹Ibid., p. 99, (ii, 68). ²Ibid., p. 225, (iv, 64).

³Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 2, (I).

⁴Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 99, (ii, 68).

⁵Ibid., pp. 369-370, (vii, 7).

selves of leanings toward Rome "and instead of taking away that intolerable Burden of a sacramental, necessary, universal Confession, have seemed to void and frustrate all Use and Exercise of the Keys."¹ He pleads with his hearers not to allow this practice to become an empty form but to retain it as an aid to the pastor. Absolution properly administered is a great aid to the pastor and a worthy comfort to the troubled soul.² Thus it is seen that Chillingworth was not willing to go so far in the reformation of the Church that all of the good was cast out.

Chillingworth never gave up his belief in episcopacy as the divinely instituted form of church government. It should not, he says, be "sacrificed to Clamour, or overborn by Violence"³ Yet he viewed episcopacy, like absolution, as a purely pastoral device, and it ought not to be retained "either in Opposition to Apostolick Institution, or to the much desired Reformation of Men's Lives, and Restauration of primitive Discipline, or any Law or Precept of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ . . . for Obedience to our Saviour is the End for which Church Government

¹Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 84, (VII, 12).

²Ibid., (VII, 14).

³William Chillingworth, Works, The Apostolical Institution of the Episcopacy Demonstrated, (London: 1742), p. 388.

is appointed."¹

His published defence of episcopacy was a short paper in the form of an extended syllogism, whereby he attempted to show that the episcopal government of the Church is so ancient as to preclude the possibility of any other having been established by Christ or the Apostles.² His logic is impeccable, but it is now known to depend on the happenings of a time concerning which there is a lack of sufficient evidence. No one knows the exact process by which church government was evolved and so the easy assumption that Christ instituted episcopacy cannot be so easily made.

Nevertheless, Chillingworth's defence of episcopacy in the limited sense which he gave to the form was consistent with his general view of the Church. Likewise, his concept of the Church is consistent with his view of faith. The Church therefore represents a society of autonomous men, every one of whom is devoted to the truth presented to man in the Holy Scripture, and everyone of whom has to gain his own admission to Heaven by obedience to that truth. As Cheynell states, "Mr. Chillingworth is sometimes Prelaticall, and sometimes Congregationall."³ And yet, if he was truly a

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Francis Cheynell, CHILLINGWORTH NOVISSIMA. Or the Sicknesse, Heresy, Death, and Buriall of William Chillingworth, (London: 1644), "A prophane Catechisme, collected out of Mr. Chillingworths Works", p. 47.

high-churchman, it can only be said that, historically, a high-church view is often held by men whose philosophical tendencies do not appear to warrant such a stand.

CHAPTER V

THE CONTROVERSY WITH ROME

It is important to notice that the theological doctrines which have been noted were developed, for the most part, out of Chillingworth's personal struggle with the claims and counter claims of Protestants and Roman Catholics. They were almost all presented in the course of one controversial volume. Chillingworth was, in his age, the great defender of the Protestant faith in England.

This position as "defender of the faith" was thrust upon him in the first place as a mark of respect in which his contemporaries held Chillingworth as a logician.¹ In the opening paragraph of the Preface to The Religion of Protestants, Chillingworth makes this logical method clear, for, he says, if his argument "were not built upon the Rock of evident Grounds and Reasons, but only upon some sandy and deceitful Appearances, now the Wind and Storms and Floods were coming, which would undoubtedly overthrow it."² His

¹Thomas Barlow, The Genuine Remains of That Learned Prelate Dr. Thomas Barlow Late Lord Bishop of Lincoln, (London: 1693), p. 347; S. R. Gardiner, "William Laud" Dictionary of National Biography, (London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1909), XI, 632-633.

²William Chillingworth, Works, The Religion of Protestants, a Safe Way to Salvation, (tenth edition; London: 1742), p. 9, (preface, 1).

desire was to get down to reasons and out of the realm of personalities. Otherwise, controversy is endless.¹

The bedrock of Chillingworth's argument was to be the Bible, the foundation upon which all Christianity is built:

For what one Conclusion is there in the whole Fabrick of my Discourse, that is not naturally deducible out of this one Principle, That all Things necessary to Salvation are contained in the Scripture? Or, what one Conclusion almost of importance is there in your Book, which is not by this one clearly confutable?²

This was to be a defence of Protestantism in the widest possible sense. The doctrinal systems of the Protestants that he sought to defend were considered negatively as "free from all Impiety, and from all Error destructive of Salvation, or in it self damnable"³ Nothing is to be taken into account other than the Protestant reliance on the written revelation.⁴

In one sense, however, Chillingworth is superior to many controversialists, for he shows that he understood the attraction of the Roman system of belief. Few who confront

¹William Chillingworth, Works, Sermons, (ninth edition; London: 1742), p. 83, (VII, 8, 9); cf., Religion of Protestants, p. 23, (preface, 40).

²Ibid., p. 22, (preface, 30); cf., p. 385, (conclusion).

³Ibid., p. 23, (preface, 40).

⁴Ibid., pp. 354-355, (vi, 56).

other faiths have any real idea of the strong appeal that the other faith makes to men.¹ It is apparent throughout The Religion of Protestants that the arguments of the Roman Church held a strong appeal for Chillingworth, even at the moment of his answering them. Yet he insisted that his own experience as a Roman Catholic convert did not render his attack null and void:

unless perhaps it be a just Exception against a Physician, that himself was sometimes in, and recovered himself from that Disease which he undertakes to cure; or against a Guide in a Way, that at first, before he had experience himself, mistook it, and afterwards found his Error and amended it. That noble Writer Michael de Montaigne, was surely of a far different mind; for he will hardly allow any Physician competent, but only for such Diseases as himself had passed through: And a far greater than Montaigne, even he that said, Tu conversus confirma fratres, gives us sufficiently to understand, that they which have themselves been in such a state as to need Conversion, are not thereby made incapable of, but rather engaged and obliged unto, and qualified for this charitable Function.²

It is not impossible that "a Man may learn of a Church, how to confute the Errors of that Church which taught him: as well as of my Master in Physick, or the Mathematicks, I may learn those Rules and Principles, by which I may confute my Master's erroneous Conclusion."³

¹W.E.H. Lecky, History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe, (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1866), I, xix.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 24, (preface, 41).

³Ibid., p. 161, (iii, 40).

The Religion of Protestants was conceived by Chillingworth as his personal answer to the arguments which had been instrumental in his conversion to the Roman Church.¹ These arguments have been published in three different accounts, all apparently by Chillingworth. The earliest record of them is in a letter from Chillingworth to Dr. Sheldon. This letter was written when Chillingworth was convinced that he was in the right way, and it advances two main arguments:

I. Whether it be not evident from the Scripture, and the Fathers, and Reason; from the goodness of God, and the necessity, of Mankind; that there must be some one Church infallible in matters of Faith?

II. Whether there be any other society of Men in the World, besides the Church of Rome; that either can upon good warrant, or indeed at all, challenge to itself the privilege of Infallibility in the matter of faith?²

These arguments appear again, in essentially the same form, in a short piece titled "An Account of what moved the Author to turn Papist, with his own Confutation of the Arguments that persuaded him thereto."³ However, this second account was not published until 1687. In the preface to The Religion of Protestants,⁴ there is still another account of

¹Ibid., p. 24, (preface, 42).

²Des Maizeaux, An Historical and Critical Account of the Life and Writings of William Chillingworth, Chancellor of the Church of Sarum, (London: 1725), p. 8.

³William Chillingworth, Works, Additional Discourses, (fifth edition; London: 1742), pp. 180-182.

⁴Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, pp. 24-25, (preface, 43).

the arguments in a form made public by the Jesuit Knott, in his pamphlet, A Direction to be observed by N. N. In this third account they are extended to ten reasons, but they are all comprehensible under the two arguments first listed above.

Thus, the controversy will be considered here as Chillingworth's answer to his own motives for going over to Rome in the first place. In this way, it will be possible to see the manner in which he applied his personal concept of the Christian faith to the controversy. No attempt will be made to abide by the order of the chapters in The Religion of Protestants, since, out of Chillingworth's own principles, that order seems more contrived than natural. Chillingworth himself constantly returns to the same points, clarifying and adding to the statements already made.

Chillingworth, following the same scheme as the Jesuit and answering each chapter in turn, gives the following outline of the book by chapters.¹ First, Papists are uncharitable in condemning Protestants. Both have one faith based on the Bible and they differ only over matters of opinion. Secondly, revealed truths are delivered to men in the Scripture and not on the authority of the Church. Thirdly, it is evident from Scripture that Christians need only agree in those points called fundamental, and God gives

¹Ibid., pp. 22-23, (preface, 31-37).

his Church no assurance beyond this. Fourthly, there need be no dispute over the creed since all points, both of belief and action, are contained in the Bible. Fifthly, there is no need for the Church to require belief in unwritten traditions as this only splits the Church. Sixthly, Protestants cannot possibly be heretics if they hold to the Scripture in all points. Seventhly, it is therefore charity to one's self to be a Protestant, since Protestants are in no wise hindered from practising all things necessary to salvation.

This whole argument depends on two assumptions:

(1) that the Scripture is final and complete both in matter and form, and (2) that the matter of the Bible, in all points necessary to salvation, is plain and evident to all men of ordinary understanding. If these points are granted, Chillingworth holds that the rest of the argument flows from them in such a way that it is unanswerable.¹

It is in line with these basic assumptions concerning the Bible as the guide for faith that Chillingworth delivers his primary attack on the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church of Rome. This doctrine he saw as the central pillar upon which all of the other errors of the Roman Church rested.² He was attacking the Roman Church

¹Ibid., p. 23, (preface, 38).

²Chillingworth, Additional Discourses, p. 185.

at that point which Bellarmine considered to be the highest matter of Christianity. No man can be certain of the faith that the Roman Church proclaims until he has made his decision on this point.¹ It can be seen from the motives that Chillingworth gave for his going over to Rome that he, at first, accepted the infallibility of the Roman Church, and later denied it. However, in attacking this doctrine first and foremost, he had departed from the early English reformers, whose attack was on a different basis and who concentrated their energy on the Roman conception of the Mass as compared with the Protestant conception of salvation by faith.²

It must be pointed out here that Chillingworth does not define the term "infallibility" at any point, but presumes that the reader has a certain knowledge of the concept. It is not to be taken as the equivalent of Papal infallibility, which Chillingworth referred to as an apostolic tradition in embryo.³ Not even the Roman Church herself knew the exact meaning of the doctrine. That is, they did not know where

¹H. Burn-Murdoch, The Development of the Papacy, (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1954), pp. 31-32.

²Cf., John Hunt, Religious Thought in England From the Reformation to the End of the Last Century, (London: Strathan and Company, 1870), I, 1.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 108, (11, 101).

the ultimate source of infallible pronouncements was to be located; whether in the Pope, or in councils, or in the whole Church universally.¹ It is a shadowy doctrine that Chillingworth is attacking, and the attack is correspondingly varied.

Although Chillingworth did not clearly say so, his basic argument against infallibility is drawn from his conception of personal knowledge. The Church may be truly infallible, but if a man does not know it personally, it matters not to him that the Church is so: "For though your Church were indeed as infallible a Propounder of Divine Truths as it pretends to be, yet, if it appeared not to me to be so, I might very well believe God most true, and your Church most false."² The question at issue in the controversy is this: "Whether your Church's Proposition be a sufficient Proposition?"³ Since it is impossible that men should be asked to have faith on the basis of a secret testimony made to other men,⁴ it is first of all a question of the individual's certain knowledge of the Church's infallibility. It is not possible to charge men with denying a truth of God, provided they "do not know, nor believe that

¹Ibid., p. 383, (vii, 35). ²Ibid., p. 61, (i, 12).

³Ibid., p. 37, (answer to preface, 8).

⁴Ibid., p. 150, (iii, 15-17).

he hath revealed it."¹

The doctrine of an infallible Church must therefore be delivered on unassailable grounds which the reason of no man can deny. Chillingworth, himself, did not accept the doctrine of infallibility because it was not capable of rational proof: "For my Part I know I am as willing and desirous, that the Bishop or Church of Rome should be infallible, (provided I might know it) as they are to be so esteemed."²

Chillingworth concedes to his opponent that it would be a better way to salvation if the Church of Rome or some church were indeed infallible and men could be certain of it. However, he informs the Jesuit,

seeing you your selves do not so much as pretend to enforce us to the Belief hereof, by any Proofs infallible and convincing; but only to induce us to it, by such as are, by your Confession, only probable and prudential Motives³

This same desire to have an infallible Church has led the Roman Church to a "false Imagination and vain Presumption . . ."⁴ of her own infallibility. It is an even wager that a religion founded on only probable motives is false.⁵ The erring premise behind the doctrine of infall-

¹Ibid., p. 61, (i, 12).

²Ibid., p. 177, (iii, 69); cf., Additional Discourses, p. 142.

³Ibid., p. 87, (ii, 28). ⁴Ibid., p. 88, (ii, 28).

⁵Ibid., p. 222, (iv, 57).

ibility is "that that Course of dealing with Men seems always more fit to Divine Providence, which seems most fit to Humane Reason."¹ They are vain men that are always tying God to their own imaginations in this way.² In other words, "he that would not be deceived must take heed, that he take not his desire that a thing should be so, for a reason that it is so."³ It was the greatest possible crime, in Chillingworth's eyes, to say that God has said so when he has not said so.⁴ The actual path to salvation is not the one that appears most easy and free from difficulty, but the one which includes real practice of the Christian way of life.⁵ Therefore, rather than conclude that God is moved by expediency,

be humbly thankful for those sufficient, nay abundant Means of Salvation, which God hath of his own Goodness granted us; and not conclude he hath done that which he hath not done, because, forsooth, in our vain Judgments, it seems convenient he should have done so.⁶

Hence, Chillingworth concludes that, on rational grounds, the doctrine of infallibility is untenable. The Church of Rome requires "a Certainty of Adherence beyond a Certainty of Evidence"⁷ She is more confident than

¹Ibid., p. 117, (ii, 128). ²Ibid., p. 120, (ii, 141).

³Ibid., p. 177, (iii, 69).

⁴Ibid., p. 153, (iii, 26); p. 332, (vi, 20).

⁵Ibid., p. 370, (vii, 8). ⁶Ibid., p. 118, (ii, 136).

⁷Ibid., p. 124, (ii, 154).

the Protestant churches although she has less reason for her confidence.¹ She makes a heavier requirement upon man than God, "as it were a great and heavy Building upon a Foundation that hath not Strength proportionable."²

If the doctrine of infallibility is not tenable on rational grounds, Chillingworth assumes that the man who rests on the infallibility of the Roman Church for his salvation is not making a rational choice, but is merely exercising his will. The Roman Church may not then argue that it is Protestants only who make "Mens Salvation depend upon Uncertainties"³ The faith of the Roman Catholics, he asserts, is made dependent on other men and their good faith, but men can have no rational assurance of the good faith of others.⁴ It is not possible, in Chillingworth's view, for a rational man to cling to an irrational intermediary; for to be rational certainly means that a man can go directly to God without the necessity of an infallible church. However, if irrational means of settling differences are to be decided upon, Protestants may have many more, such as the casting of lots, than the Roman Church. But the decisive means must be "rational

¹Ibid., p. 359, (vi. 51). ²Ibid., p. 125, (ii, 154).

³Ibid., p. 97, (ii, 63).

⁴Ibid., pp. 97-100, (ii, 63-74).

and well-grounded, and of God's Appointment"1

Rationally, the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church of Rome only raises unanswerable questions. Each argument advanced depends on an earlier and more doubtful statement: there is no end to these demands

'till we rest in something evident of it self, which demonstrated to the World that this Church is infallible. And seeing there is no such Rock for the Infallibility of this Church to be settled on, it must of necessity, like the Island of Delos, float up and down for ever."2

The infallibility of the Roman Catholic Church is not fit to prove itself.³ Consequently, the Roman doctrine of infallibility is to be denied on purely rational grounds.

At the same time, Chillingworth is willing to admit that the doctrine of infallibility could be proven for the Christian faith if it could be demonstrated from the Bible. Thus Chillingworth returns to his premise that the Bible begat the Church. A Scriptural proof of the truth of infallibility must be unambiguous and rest only on the authority of the Bible; infallibility cannot be proved by a passage which itself rests on an infallible interpretation of the Church of Rome.⁴ The circular argument which Rome uses to justify infallibility only makes it impossible for a

¹Ibid., p. 146, (iii, 7). ²Ibid., p. 86, (ii, 25).

³Ibid., p. 186, (iii, 89).

⁴Chillingworth, Additional Discourses, p. 142.

thinking man to have faith.¹

Thus the major argument that Chillingworth uses to combat the idea that the Church of Rome is infallible is from the silence of Scripture: "I could never yet, from the Beginning of Genesis to the End of the Apocalypse, find it written so much as once in express Terms, or equivalently, that the Church, in subordination to the See of Rome, shall always be infallible."² Or again, he asks: Why is this doctrine not in St. Luke, whose express intent was to deliver the whole gospel, that is, all things necessary to salvation?"³ If all faith depends on this doctrine of infallibility, as Chillingworth conceived Rome to believe, then the Bible would have been a better guide for faith, had nothing else been written in it save the statement that the Roman Church is infallible.⁴ The fact that the Bible nowhere says that the Church of Rome alone is infallible is the central core of Chillingworth's argument; it is delivered on almost every page of his book.

Chillingworth, however, states plainly that the

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 13, (preface, 8); pp. 107-109, (ii, 101).

²Chillingworth, Additional Discourses, p. 142.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 333, (vi, 20).

⁴Ibid.

doctrine of the infallible Roman Church is not incompatible with the presence of Scripture. Here the analogy is with civil government which has both a legal code and a judge. However, the analogy is not in reality permissible, because in civil law the judge is explicitly named.¹ The best that the Church of Rome can do is to confess that she is not specifically named as the judge, but pretend that it was not necessary:

Yet if the King should tell us, the Lord-Keeper should judge such and such Causes; but should either not tell us at all, or tell us but doubtfully, who should be the Lord-Keeper, should we be any Thing the nearer for him to an End of Contentions? Nay rather, would not the Dissensions about the Person who it is, increase Contentions rather than end them? Just so it would have been, if God had appointed a Church to be Judge of Controversies, and had not told us which was that Church. Seeing therefore God doth nothing in vain, and seeing it had been in vain to appoint a Judge of Controversies, and not to tell us plainly who it is; and seeing lastly he hath not told us plainly, no not at all who it is; is it not evident he hath appointed none?²

However, the conclusion that the Church may be infallible, as well as the Scripture, is an argument that tells for Protestantism as well as Romanism.³ Therefore it is not necessary to show by some text of Scripture that, by the coming of the Bible, infallibility deserted the Church: this argument is "somewhat like his Discourse that said, It could

¹Ibid., pp. 84-85, (ii, 14-22).

²Ibid., p. 177, (iii, 69).

³Ibid., pp. 118-119, (ii, 137).

not be proved out of Scripture, that the King of Sweden was dead, therefore he is still living."¹ "The Question is not, Whether an infallible Church might agree with Scripture; but whether there be an infallible Church?"²

The Church of Rome has gone astray in the matter of infallibility because she does not allow herself freedom in declaring the meaning of the Bible. The origin of every Roman interpretation of Scripture is the need to prove the infallibility of the Church of Rome before the world: "In those Texts of Scripture, which you alledge for the Infallibility of your Church, do not you allow what Sense you think true, and disallow the contrary?"³ Rome's pretence of using the Bible to settle the question of infallibility is rank hypocrisy:

for you use them with Prejudice, and with a settled Resolution not to believe any Thing which these Means happily may suggest in to you, if it any way cross the pre-conceived Perswasion of your Church's Infallibility. You give not yourselves Liberty of Judgment in the Use of them, nor suffer your selves to be led by them to the Truth⁴

This refusal to allow herself a free use of the Scriptures together with refusal to allow doctrine to be judged by Scripture, the only means by which error may be discovered

¹Ibid., p. 119, (ii, 138). ²Ibid., (ii, 139).

³Ibid., pp. 113-114, (ii, 118).

⁴Ibid., p. 127, (ii, 156); cf., p. 158, (iii, 34).

and confuted, has made the erring condition of the Roman Church incurable.¹

The premise behind the refusal to allow freedom in the Church is the false assumption that every error in faith destroys faith.² Chillingworth does not equate faith with correctness of belief in all things: the end toward which God directs men is salvation.³ Faith then is not a perfect thing but is capable of "Augmentation and Diminution." It is not perfection, but the movement toward perfection.⁴ It is definitely erroneous to assume that only the Church of Rome can provide an infallible basis for faith. What is needed is not an infallible faith founded on an infallible Church, but rather a firm faith, capable of overcoming the will and affections of men.⁵ Chillingworth rests again on the basic assumption that each man must know the facts of faith for himself. Correct belief founded on an infallible Church is not possible until a man knows personally the infallibility of that Church.⁶

It is at this point in the discussion that Chillingworth brings in the concept of a minimum creedal statement.

¹Ibid., p. 332, (vi, 19).

²Ibid., pp. 177-178, (iii, 70).

³Ibid., p. 89, (ii, 32). ⁴Ibid., p. 324, (vi, 4).

⁵Ibid., p. 325, (vi, 5). ⁶Ibid., p. 61, (i, 12).

This he does by making a distinction between what is fundamental and what is non-fundamental in the Christian faith. It is clearly not possible for this concept to exist alongside a doctrine which claims that the Church is infallible in all points. The doctrine of a minimum creedal statement renders absolute infallibility unnecessary or at least superfluous.

It is not permissible, therefore, to force uniformity upon the Church; Christians must seek agreement in a minimum creedal statement only: That is, "Their belief of all those things which are plainly and undoubtedly delivered in Scripture, which whoso believes, must of necessity believe all things necessary to Salvation: and their mutual suffering one another to abound in their several sense, in matters not plainly and undoubtedly there delivered."¹ The duty of Christians is to love their brethren, even though there are differences of opinion concerning things outside the bounds of a minimum creedal statement, and to live with them in "an Unity of Charity, and Mutual Toleration . . ."²

In Chillingworth's mind the divergence between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant churches is greatest on this question of a minimum statement of the faith. His Jesuit opponent would give no statement of the

¹Ibid., p. 145, (iii, 2). ²Ibid., p. 103, (ii, 85).

fundamentals of faith, save this: "That all is fundamental which the Church hath defined . . ."¹ Against this claim of the Church's right of definition, Chillingworth would invoke the Bible, the written record of revelation: "That it is sufficient for any Man's Salvation to believe that the Scripture is true and contains all Things necessary for Salvation; and do his best Endeavour to find and believe the true Sense of it . . ."² From Chillingworth's standpoint, it is a case of the Church versus the Scripture. This is the idea behind Chillingworth's best remembered phrase: "The BIBLE, I say, the BIBLE only, is the Religion of Protestants!"³

In this way the way is paved for the charge that the Roman Church does violence to the true Biblical faith. The Church of Rome, by claiming infallibility, challenges "Privileges, and Exemption from the Condition of Men, which is to be subject to Error . . ."⁴ Chillingworth's understanding of the Church is that it is a localized institution made up of men, every one of whom has free-will: consequently the whole has free-will.⁵ Roman Catholics deify the Church,⁶ but it is only an aggregation of believers, and God has not left it to men to determine what they are to

¹Ibid., p. 149, (iii, 13). ²Ibid., p. 149, (iii, 13).

³Ibid., p. 354, (vi, 56). ⁴Ibid., p. 119, (ii, 138).

⁵Ibid., p. 158, (iii, 34). ⁶Ibid., p. 290, (v, 93).

believe.¹

The fundamental error of Rome is in "not distinguishing between actual Certainty and absolute Infallibility."² As faith is not a perfect thing, so free-will is a necessary concomitant. There is neither reason nor revelation to demonstrate that the entire religion of Christ will ever be professed without error.³ Suppose, says Chillingworth,

it were true, that God had promised to assist you, for the delivering of true Scripture, would this oblige him, or would it follow from hence, that he had obliged himself to teach you, not only sufficiently, but effectually and irresistably the true Sense of Scripture?⁴ ch

Chillingworth's answer to his own question is, "No." God gives to man only the potentiality of true knowledge; he does not thwart the purpose of his creation, which is to glorify itself by its own free obedience to God. The victory of man over the forces of the world is not complete;⁵ otherwise there could be no faith. Thus the Christian doctrine of free-will is a complete and radical denial of the Roman conception of infallibility, for if God were to make man infallibly certain of the sense of the Bible, all free-will would necessarily be destroyed.⁶ Even the Holy Spirit is not able to "necessitate Men to believe aright, without tak-

¹Ibid., p. 120, (ii, 142). ²Ibid., p. 154, (iii, 26).

³Ibid., p. 353, (vi, 55). ⁴Ibid., p. 105, (ii, 93).

⁵Ibid., p. 324, (vi, 4). ⁶Ibid., p. 105, (ii, 93).

ing away their Free-will in believing, and in professing their Belief."¹

Neither can the doctrine be retained by a declaration of Papal infallibility. What is true of individuals within the Christian churches must likewise be true of the Bishop of Rome. Can it be said that the Pope does not have free-will; "that Popes are not subject to the Sins and Passions of other Men? that there never have been ambitious, covetous, lustful, tyrannous Popes?"² No man will be more prone to err than that man who allows his understanding to be led captive by the idea of infallibility. The Pope may not claim infallibility by succession to the Chair of Peter, for many men who have occupied that office "have been notoriously and confessedly wicked Men, Men of the World: whereas this Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him."³

What then of the promise of the Holy Spirit made in John 14:25-26? The Roman Church perpetually cites this text by halves. The promise of the Holy Spirit in the full context is clearly limited to the Apostles' persons.⁴ However, even if it is conceded, which it is not, that the Spirit's leading is granted to the Church of every age, an infallible

¹Ibid., p. 106, (ii, 96). ²Ibid., p. 118, (ii, 130).

³Ibid., p. 158, (iii, 34). ⁴Ibid., p. 179, (iii, 72).

Church does not follow thereon. The freedom of man is interposed between the Spirit's teaching and man's learning: "I conclude therefore, that the Spirit may very well teach the Church, and yet the Church fall into, and continue in Error, by not regarding what she is taught by the Spirit."¹

Notwithstanding the freedom of men, the Church must have certainty in the message that it proclaims. There is, Chillingworth says, "a difference, between confining the Spirit of God to them, and confining the Promises made in this place to them."² Contrary to the Roman claim, the promise made in this place is conditional, being "restrained to those only, that love God, and keep his Commandments: and . . . [the promise] is flatly denied to all, whom the Scripture stiles by the name of the World"³

Therefore, Chillingworth falls back on the demand for absolute certainty: "the place produced by you, as a main Pillar of your Church's Infallibility, prove upon tryal an engine to batter and overthrow it, at least, (which is all one to my purpose) to take away all possibility of our Assurance of it?"⁴ All rational assurance of infallibility is lost because

We can have no Certainty of the Infallibility of your

¹Ibid., p. 178, (iii, 71). ²Ibid., p. 179, (iii, 73).

³Ibid., p. 180, (iii, 75). ⁴Ibid.

Church, but upon this supposition, that your Popes are infallible in confirming the Decrees of General Councils; we can have no Certainty hereof, but upon this supposition, that the Spirit of Truth is promised to them for their direction in this work: And of this again we can have no Certainty, but upon supposal, that they perform the Condition whereunto the Promise of the Spirit of Truth is expressly limited, viz. That they love God and keep his Commandments: And of this, finally, not knowing the Popes heart, we can have no certainty at all; therefore from first to last, we can have no certainty at all of your Church's Infallibility.¹

If all rational assurance of the absolute infallibility of the Church of Rome is denied, are men to eschew all notions of infallibility? No, certainly not in Chillingworth's eyes, for that which had brought him back to the Church of England was the argument advanced by some Romans that the Church is infallible only in fundamentals.² When the Bible speaks of the Church as "the Pillar and Ground, that is, the Teacher of Truth, of all Truth, not only necessary but profitable to Salvation;" it is speaking of "duty," not of "performance," and therefore "teach us not what the Thing or Person is of necessity, but what it should be."³ It is not enough for the Roman Church to show a limited infallibility; she must demonstrate that she teaches "simply all" truth.⁴ Since this claim cannot be

¹Ibid., p. 180-181, (iii, 75).

²Chillingworth, Additional Discourses, p. 180.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 181, (iii, 77).

⁴Ibid., p. 182, (iii, 78).

justified, the Church must turn to another concept of infallibility.

Positively, the church must see clearly the difference between a Church that is "infallible in Fundamentals," and a Church that is "an infallible Guide even in Fundamentals."¹ Logically the Church may be no more than the former: "the true Church always shall be the Maintainer and Teacher of all necessary Truth, . . . for it is of the essence of the Church to be so" ² These meanings may not be confused without causing an ultimate confusion in the minds of men:

For to say, the Church, while it is the Church, may err in Fundamentals, implies a Contradiction, and is all one as to say, the Church while it is the Church, may not be the Church. So that to say that the Church is infallible in Fundamentals, signifies no more but this, There shall a Church in the World for ever. But we utterly deny the Church to be the latter; for to say so, were to oblige our selves to find some certain Society of Men, of whom we might be certain, that they neither do, nor can err in Fundamentals.³

The answer implies that the Roman Church is no more than one denomination sharing in the limited infallibility of the truly universal Church. Men are not, therefore, to seek one qualified to guide them out of the welter of churches, for this "were not to be guided by the Church to the true Doctrine, but by the true Doctrine to the Church."⁴

¹Ibid., p. 119, (ii, 139). ²Ibid., p. 182, (iii, 78).

³Ibid., p. 119, (ii, 139). ⁴Ibid.

The Roman claim of infallibility lodged in one single manifestation of the Church only leads to doubt: to the absurd conclusion that all men are required to examine the history of the Church and the meaning of her doctrine in order to recognize the claims of the true Church. This is thrust upon man because there is no clear and undoubted revelation of the name of the only true denomination. Something like this same doubt led Chillingworth himself to make his own changes in religious affiliation. The resolution of these doubts by the doctrines of limited infallibility and rational autonomy gave him confidence in his Protestant position.

The remainder of the controversy is a mere corollary to the question of infallibility. In his own conversion to the Church of Rome, Chillingworth was persuaded first of the truth of infallibility and secondly of the fact that only Rome could claim this infallibility.¹ It is again a question of certainty: "I demand again some infallible Ground, both for the Church's Infallibility, and for this, that Your's is the Church"²

Therefore the second part of the controversy con-

¹Chillingworth, Additional Discourses, p. 180; Des Maizeaux, op. cit., p. 8.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 91, (ii, 45).

cerns the place of the Church of Rome and the truth of her claims to universality. The first part of this is a discussion of what happened in the Reformation. For this purpose Chillingworth makes use of the simile which was first used by Potter.¹ He declared that the Church may be likened to a group of men universally infected with the same disease, and the Reformed part, to some men who have found a way to escape that disease. Uninfected as they are, however, they cannot be said to have ceased to be a part of their society.² In this way, Chillingworth justifies the acts of Luther on general grounds: he defends Luther's cause but not his person, and declares that the violence of the Reformation is inexcusable, whether it was on the Protestant side³ or the Roman.⁴

It is also important to Chillingworth that the Reformation should be viewed as a new thing in history and not simply as a new manifestation of the old errors of the Donatists and Novatians. In order to make the charge of Donatism valid against Protestants, it must be demonstrated

¹Christopher Potter, Want of Charitie Justly Charged on all Such Romanists, as dare (without truth or modesty) affirme, that Protestancie destroyeth Salvation, (Oxford: 1633), p. 80.

²Cf., Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, pp. 284-292, (v, 84-95).

³Ibid., p. 304, (v, 112). ⁴Ibid., p. 293, (v, 96).

that the Church of Rome is in exactly the same state now as at the time of Donatus. But there is this difference, that while St. Augustine and Optatus abhorred the errors which formed a valid basis for the charges of the Donatists, the present Roman Church continues in those false practices with which she may be justly charged.¹ The Protestant charge against the Roman Church is limited to a refusal to recognize her "Integrity." Protestants do not urge that she lost her "Essence, and became no Church at all" ²

The Reformation must then be regarded as a new thing, in terms of cause and not in terms of the action taken:

the first Reformers, as well as the Donatists and Novatians, opposed . . . the Commands of the visible Church, that is, of a great Part of it: Yet the Reformers had Reason, nay necessity to do so, the Church being then corrupted with damnable Errors; which was not true of the Church, when it was opposed by the Novatians and Donatists. And therefore though they, and the Reformers, did the same Action, yet doing it upon different Grounds, it might in these merit Applause, and in them Condemnation.³

In this passage the important note has been struck. In the separation of the churches, it is the cause, or the validity of the reasons assigned for the separation, that is the significant point. It cannot be maintained that Luther was a schismatic unless it can be proved that his separation from

¹Ibid., pp. 330-331, (vi, 16).

²Ibid., p. 331, (vi, 17); cf., p. 262, (v, 13).

³Ibid., p. 304, (v, 111).

Rome was without cause.¹

In this argument, Chillingworth was leaning heavily upon the definitions of schism provided by the English reformers of the sixteenth century.² Therefore he would not accept the Jesuit's definition of schism as "a Division from the True Church"³ May it not be considered "as well a Division of the Church as from it? A Separation, not of a Part from the Whole, but of some Parts from the other."⁴ Therefore Protestants admit to one part of schism, but they do not admit to being schismatics: A man may have one symptom of the plague and not have the plague.⁵ Thus Chillingworth admits that the Church of Rome and the Church of England are not united, while he at the same time denied that Anglicans are schismatics in the proper sense of the term, "because they had just, and great and necessary Cause to separate, which Schismatics never have; because they that have it, are no Schismatics. For Schism is always a causeless Separation."⁶

¹Ibid., p. 296, (v, 103).

²H. F. Woodhouse, The Doctrine of the Church in Anglican Theology (1547-1603), (London: S. P. C. K., 1954), pp. 63-66.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 264, (v, 22).

⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid., p. 269, (v, 38).

⁶Ibid., p. 282, (v, 74).

It is this note of cause which assumes exaggerated importance in Chillingworth's defence of Protestantism. The substratum of this defence is found in the conception of the autonomous individual and the analogy of the Church with a man. The content of faith is given to men in the Scriptures, and every individual is able to determine the fundamental articles of faith for himself. If a man can determine the content of faith, he can also discover corruptions in an impure rendering of that faith; therefore, "we cannot be Schismatics, for refusing to join with you in the Profession of these Errors, and the Practice of these corruptions."¹ The autonomous man is placed squarely over against the authoritarian Church.

In this way the ground is prepared for finding the cause of schism in the Church of Rome. When the cause of schism is found in Rome,

the immediate Corollary . . . will be and must be, that not Protestants for rejecting, but the Church of Rome, for imposing upon the Faith of Christians, Doctrines unwritten and unnecessary, and for disturbing the Church's Peace, and dividing Unity for such matters, is in a high degree presumptuous and schismatical.²

This doctrine, as Chillingworth shows, is applicable to all parts of Christendom, not only to Rome, which he mentions specifically. All men are guilty of "playing the Pope,"³

¹Ibid., p. 273, (v, 51). ²Ibid., p. 23, (preface, 35).

³Ibid., p. 203, (iv, 16).

and

This presumptuous imposing of the senses of men upon the Words of God, the special senses of men upon the general Words of God, and laying them upon Men's Consciences together, under equal Penalty of death and damnation; . . . this Restraining of the Word of God from that latitude and generality, and the Understandings of Men from that liberty, wherein Christ and the Apostles left them, is, and hath been the only Fountain of all the Schisms of the Church, and that which makes them immortal¹

Therefore Chillingworth's argument is directed mainly against the Roman insistence on her own infallibility. Not only does this doctrine make the Roman Church herself incapable of reformation, but it does not appear to be true to rational men.²

Protestants are consequently freed from the imputation of schism because they do not maintain that Rome is a false church.³ The charge of schism against Protestants is false because it is not the same thing "to leave the Church, and to leave the external communion of a Church" ⁴ Protestants intend no rigid separation of the Church: "we do not renounce your Communion totally and absolutely, but only leave communicating with you in the Practice and Profession of your Errors."⁵ Protestants are

¹Ibid., p. 203, (iv, 17).

²Ibid., pp. 183-184, (iii, 81).

³Ibid., p. 377, (vii, 26). ⁴Ibid., p. 268, (v, 32).

⁵Ibid., p. 42, (answer to preface, 23).

also free from the charge of being in schism because their own intent is correct, and no charge of schism can be made without a correct assessment of this intent.¹ It is Chillingworth's conclusion that the Church of Rome "cast us out of your Communion: And then with a strange and contradictory and ridiculous Hypocrisy, complain that we forsake it. As if a Man should thrust his Friend out of doors, and then be offended at his departure."²

The Church, according to Chillingworth, has an authority which is superceded by the conscience of the individual, when that conscience is informed by the Word of God.³ The action of the informed conscience is completely compulsive: Christ himself "hath forbid us under Pain of Damnation, to profess what we believe not, and consequently under the same Penalty, to leave that Communion in which we cannot remain without this hypocritical Profession of those Things, which we are convinced to be erroneous."⁴ Without this complete submission of the conscience to the will of God, there is little hope of salvation.⁵ Not to oppose the Church when a man is convinced that she holds "known Errors

¹Ibid., p. 287, (v, 87).

²Ibid., p. 42, (answer to preface, 22); cf., p. 290, (ii, 92).

³Ibid., pp. 301-302, (v, 109).

⁴Ibid., p. 278, (v, 62). ⁵Ibid., p. 278, (v, 62).

and Falsehoods, is certainly a capital Sin, and of great Affinity with the Sin which shall never be forgiven."¹

This placing of the authority of individual conscience above the authority of the Church has its ground in Chillingworth's subjective view of the truth. That is, there must be a personal apprehension of the revelation of God by every man in order for that truth to be valid for him. It is altogether impossible that men should suspend rational judgment,² or forsake reason, without forsaking their humanity.³ It is the hope of being free from error, by rational means, that is the Protestant excuse for leaving the communion of the Church of Rome.⁴

Chillingworth did not intend, in opposition to the Church of Rome, to set up infallible individuals in the place of an infallible Church. Men, as well as the Church, must have free-will, but they are promised assistance if they pursue the will of God by the means that he has appointed, that is, in total submission to the written revelation. However, it is inconsequential to argue that

¹Ibid., p. 279, (v, 64).

²William Chillingworth, Works, Reasons Against Popery, (London: 1742), p. 392.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 287, (v, 88).

⁴Ibid., p. 82, (ii, 11); p. 113, (ii, 116); pp. 124-126, (ii, 153-154).

Protestants may err as well as the Church of Rome, therefore they did so! . . . He is equally fallible who believes twice two to be four, as he that believes them to be twenty; yet in this he is not equally deceived, and he may be certain that he is not so. One Architect is no more infallible than another, and yet he is more secure that his Work is right and straight who hath made it by the Level, than he which hath made it by Guess and by Chance.¹

The man who forsakes Rome may check his argument by the Bible and profess the truth without remorse.² With the Bible as his guide, one man can stand up to the Church with confidence:

any private Man who truly believes the Scripture, and seriously endeavours to know the Will of God, and to do it, is as secure as the visible Church, . . . from . . . erring in Fundamentals; for it is impossible, that any Man so qualified should fall into any Error which to him will prove damnable: For God requires no more of any Man to his Salvation, but his true Endeavour to be saved.³

This right to supreme authority for every individual is not to be surrendered simply because it results in inconvenience.⁴ Therefore the term "Catholic Church" must be given the truly universal meaning that Chillingworth gives to it: it is "the Church of all Ages, and that Succession of Christians which takes in Christ himself and his Apostles."⁵ It is only the Church in this sense which has any authority

¹Ibid., pp. 278-279, (v, 63).

²Ibid., p. 279, (v, 63).

³Ibid., (v, 64).

⁴Ibid., pp. 281-282, (v, 72).

⁵Ibid., p. 94, (ii, 54).

for Christians.¹

The universal Church is not one part of the body of the Church.² It was Chillingworth's contention that the unity of those in communion with the See of Rome is neither actually nor potentially greater than that of the Protestant churches.³ Even Christianity, taken as a whole, may not be said to be the universal religion de facto; "you forget how lately almost half the World was discovered, and in what Estate it was found"⁴ The Church is universal de jure, but this is the right of the gospel to be preached and not the right of one denomination of Christians.⁵ Universality may not be claimed by virtue of number, because, in this case, Rome would have to conclude that she had perished at the time of the Arian controversy.⁶

In Chillingworth's view, the Roman claims are too mechanical. By such claims she formulates arguments for the use of Anti-christ when he comes.⁷ Against these mechanical claims to dispense the Gospel of Christ, Chillingworth asserts the ideal of divine truth. This is the Bible, delivered, not

¹Ibid., pp. 103-104, (ii, 88).

²Ibid., p. 267, (v, 27). ³Ibid., p. 146, (iii, 6).

⁴Ibid., p. 330, (vi, 14); cf., p. 353, (vi, 42).

⁵Ibid., p. 330, (vi, 14). ⁶Ibid., p. 353, (vi, 42).

⁷Ibid.

mechanically, but by the providence of God; preserved, not by one church but by all churches that together merit the name of the Church. Individual churches' members of this universal fellowship based on the Scriptures may be at variance with one another.¹

The truth of any existing church does not depend on its unbroken descent from a true Church:

For what Sense is there, that it should not be in the power of God Almighty, to restore to a flourishing Estate, a Church which Oppression has made invisible? To repair that which is ruined, to reform that which was corrupted, or to revive that which was dead? Nay, what Reason, is there, but that by ordinary means this may be done, so long as the Scriptures by Divine Providence are preserved in their Integrity and Authority? As a Commonwealth, though never so far collapsed and over-run with Disorders, is yet in possibility of being reduced into its Original state, so long as the Antient Laws, and Fundamental Constitutions are extant, and remain inviolate, from whence Men may be directed how to make such a Reformation.²

Protestants are therefore within the true Church because of their relationship to the truth of Christ: "Nothing but Want of Truth, and holding Error, may make or prove any Man or Church heretical."³ A church, like a philosophy, depends for its name on its adherence to the system of its founder and on nothing else. The Bible is a book of divine truths, revealed, but nevertheless to be understood under the general category of truth. "And why then may not he

¹Ibid., pp. 107-109, (ii, 101).

²Ibid., p. 264, (v, 21). ³Ibid., p. 347, (vi, 38).

that believes the Scripture to be the Word of God, and the Rule of Faith, regulate his Faith by it, and consequently believe aright, without much regarding what other Men either will do, or have done?"¹

The Roman Church has taken too much for her special province, thereby making her own "Functions necessary, but Obedience to God unnecessary" ² Chillingworth, like most others of his time, thought the Apostle's Creed to be a genuine production of the Apostles and therefore a sufficient summary of all the "Articles of simple Belief, necessary to be explicitly believed."³ The Creed is more than a summary of the minimum doctrinal affirmation required of Christians. The Creed considered positively, is a summary of the maximum doctrinal affirmation required of Christians. Rome, however, observes no creed: "The Doctrine of your Church may like a Snow-ball increase with rowling, and again, if you please, melt away and decrease: But as Christ Jesus, so his Gospel, is yesterday, and to day, and the same for ever."⁴

It is Chillingworth's contention that the Church of Rome fails to take cognizance of the limits of the Church as a human institution. Therefore she delivers many doctrines on "the bare Authority of Men" ⁵ This

¹Ibid., p. 348, (vi, 38). ²Ibid., p. 370, (vii, 8).

³Ibid., p. 211, (iv, 37). ⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 210, (iv, 34).

human authority is a direct denial of "this essential, and fundamental Article of Faith, That all Divine Revelations are true"¹ The Church by itself proves nothing; its true function is to introduce men to the faith by testifying to the reality of revelation.²

Running throughout the book is the tacit assumption that the concept of faith is the same in the Roman as in the Protestant churches. It is because of this unexamined assumption that Chillingworth can assume that the argument is in fact about the controversial points over which men are allowed to differ as they see fit, i.e., points not stated in the Apostles' Creed. The difference between the two men is that Chillingworth refuses to assume "that God hath appointed some visible Judge of Controversies, to whose Judgment all Men are to submit themselves."³ Chillingworth believed that men, all men, whether they are Protestant or Roman Catholic ultimately choose their religion.⁴ If men are to choose, then he assumed that men are fit to choose, every man choosing only for himself.⁵

Thus the denial of infallibility, and with it the

¹Ibid., p. 200, (iv, 4). ²Ibid., pp. 160-161, (iii, 38).

³Ibid., p. 212, (ii, 40).

⁴Ibid., p. 82, (ii, 11); p. 124, (ii, 153).

⁵Ibid., p. 84, (ii, 16).

denial of the authority of any one visible Church, has its basis in Chillingworth's complete faith in the rational man. Men are not sent "on the Fool's Pilgrimage for Faith, . . ." that is, they are not sent to any other man, but are sent by that reason in them to "the Word of God and the Word of God directs [them] to Heaven."¹ All men, by this means, rely on the Bible, and all men are capable of an understanding of the Bible sufficient to bring them personally to salvation.²

Throughout the book, Chillingworth's argument is influenced by the use of the analogy between the pilgrimage of faith and the journey from one part of the country to another. Salvation is the goal at the end of the pilgrimage of faith, and both Protestants and Romanists seek a guide for the way. The Romanist chooses a professional and infallible guide to show him the path. The Protestant, relying on his own intelligence, seeks only for a map of the way.³ The Protestant, to whom the path is known, therefore has no need for an infallible guide.⁴ Thus the final answer to Rome is the rational autonomy of man, justified by the perspicuity of the Bible.

¹Ibid., p. 222, (iv, 56).

²Ibid., p. 110, (ii, 105-106).

³Ibid., p. 113, (ii, 116).

⁴Chillingworth, Additional Discourses, p. 177.

CHAPTER VI

THE VIRTUE OF TOLERATION

The development of the spirit of religious toleration in England from the year 1603 has been well documented. In most of these studies Chillingworth is cited as one who contributed much to this development. His place in the history of toleration is important because it came at a time when toleration was not a virtue.

It is true that much of what he wrote led to the ideal of religious toleration, but it is not true that he was specifically concerned with the general problem. Chillingworth was dealing with the doctrine of exclusiveness presented by the Roman Church, a question which is not necessarily relevant to the problem of toleration as such.¹ However, in the course of carrying on the controversy with the Jesuit, he laid down the broadest possible line of defence against the Roman principles.² At the same time he was concerned to defend all Protestants, in their many churches, and not one sect or denomination of them.

Chillingworth developed his defence of the

¹T. Lyon, The Theory of Religious Toleration in England 1603-1639, (Cambridge: University Press, 1937), p. 166.

²J. Hay Colligan, The Arian Movement in England, (Manchester: University Press, 1913), p. 8.

Protestantism of the private conscience in such a way that it destroyed the basis on which persecution rested. At the same time, moving along positive lines, he suggested a broad outline for determining the membership of the universal Church. The Church, as he saw it, was not advancing along the path that Christ had ordained for it: "What Madness is this? . . . learn of us what Christ said, which contradict and damn all other Parts of Christendom."¹

There can be no doubt that unorthodox influences played a large part in developing this tolerant spirit in Chillingworth. This was probably the direct result of carrying on the bulk of the work at Falkland's home. MacLachlan has shown that Falkland probably had a large collection of Socinian writings at Tew,² and Trevor-Roper x calls him the great patron of the Socinian reception in England and his house the center of such studies.³ It is noteworthy that most of the authorities Chillingworth cites to bolster his own argument lie outside the pale of orthodox Christian thought. While it is true that Chillingworth

¹William Chillingworth, Works, The Religion of Protestants, a Safe Way to Salvation, (tenth edition; London, 1742), p. 108, (ii, 101).

²H. John MacLachlan, Socinianism in Seventeenth Century England, (Oxford: University Press, 1951), pp. 123-125.

³Hugh Trevor-Roper, "Erasmus", Encounter, v. IV, no. 5, May 1955, p. 66.

does not cite any Socinian author by name, he does refer to Acontius as a divine of "great learning and judgment."¹ Chillingworth also refers to "That noble Writer Michael de Montaigne, . . ."² and to "that learned Man Hugo Grotius . . ." and to his book, Of the Truth of the Christian Religion, from which he quotes a long passage.³ Among his more minor citations are Averroes,⁴ Zanchius,⁵ and Sir Edwin Sands.⁶ Hooker is cited several times but mainly to clear up what Chillingworth considers to be the Jesuit's misuse of him.

The greatest influence on Chillingworth's stand was perhaps Christopher Potter who may have been instrumental in affecting Chillingworth's return from Rome.⁷ Potter himself had moved from a strict Calvinism to a moderate latitudinarian position as early as 1629,⁸ so that in following him, Chillingworth was writing in defence of a liberal

¹Chillingworth, op. cit., p. 203, (iv, 16), footnote.

²Ibid., p. 24, (preface, 14).

³Ibid., pp. 359-360, (vi, 51).

⁴Ibid., p. 13, (preface, 8). ⁵Ibid., p. 113, (ii, 116).

⁶Ibid., p. 19, (preface, 22-23).

⁷Ibid., Epistle Dedicatory.

⁸MacLachlan, op. cit., p. 58; (There is an apparent reference to this fact in Religion of Protestants, p. 297, (v, 103).

position. There can be little doubt that Potter had read Acontius¹ and that he was responsible for the 1631 edition of Acontius' work in England.² Chillingworth testifies several times to the close collaboration with Potter in defence of the truth.³ Chillingworth could not easily write a narrow book in defence of broad principles.

Of prime importance in Chillingworth's development of the concept of toleration was his personal understanding of the moral demands of Christianity. The Christian faith demands obedience to the commands of Christ. These absolute demands not to be abrogated by the teaching of the Church are:

the Precepts of Piety and Humility, of Innocence and Patience, of Liberality, Frugality, Temperance, Sobriety, Justice, Meekness, Fortitude, Constancy and Gravity, Contempt of the World, Love of God, and Love of Mankind; . . . which the Scriptures impose upon us, to be obeyed under pain of Damnation; The Sum whereof is in a manner comprised in our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount⁴

By such a perfect submission to God, men may remain true to the gift of God in Christ reconciling the world; nothing

¹MacLachlan, op. cit., p. 59.

²Francis Cheynell, The Rise, Growth, and Danger of Socinianisme, (London: 1643), pp. 36-37.

³Chillingworth, op. cit., p. 378, (vii, 28); p. 384 (conclusion).

⁴Ibid., p. 357, (vi, 71).

less than this will satisfy God.¹

With this conception of the absolute moral demands of the gospel, it is not surprising that Chillingworth was himself unable to find any real drive to persecute others. His reaction to the Civil War is an example of this concern in action. The positive duty of Christians is to make friends:²

the chief Badge and *κρίτηριον*, whereby Christ would have his Servants to be distinguished from the World, be a Willingness to suffer Injuries, a Desire rather to have the other Cheek stricken, and to have the Cloak go the same way with the Coat, than to revenge one Blow with another³

When he looked back on the Reformation, Chillingworth saw the cause of the resulting warfare, not in the schisms of the Church, but, only in the persecution for following the dictates of their private consciences.⁴ The Christian religion is diametrically opposed to the use of force:

for I have learnt from the antient Fathers of the Church, that nothing is more against Religion than to force Religion; and of St. Paul, The Weapons of the Christian Warfare are not carnal, And great Reason: For human Violence may make Men counterfeit, but cannot make them believe, and is therefore fit for nothing, but to breed Form without, and Atheism within.⁵

¹William Chillingworth, Works, Sermons, (ninth edition; London, 1742), p. 49, (IV, 43).

²Ibid., p. 77, (VI, 34). ³Ibid., p. 37, (III, 36).

⁴Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 300, (v, 106).

⁵Ibid., p. 292, (v, 96).

All the power in the world is not fit to compel a man's conscience in anything;¹ men should choose "rather to be Martyrs than Murderers, and to die for their Religion rather than to fight for it."² Men should not think that they do God a good service when they kill the adversaries of their religion, for this is a right claimed by all religions and therefore allowable in none.³ Has God given man "Strength and Weapons for this End, that thereby he might be able to . . . over-run and lay waste those whom God loveth as the Apple of his own Eye?"⁴ This persecution of others in the name of God is the third

great Evil under the Sun, . . . Men think they can have no greater nor more approved Testimony of their Religion, and Zeal of God's Truth, than by hating and abhorring, by reviling and traducing, their Brethren, if they differ from them in any, tho' the most ordinary innocent Opinions⁵

Until men refrain from "all Means either violent or fraudulent" in the propagation of religion, "to talk of Estimation, Respect and Reverence to the Scripture, is

¹Ibid., p. 84, (ii, 18).

²Ibid., p. 293, (v, 96); cf. William Chillingworth, Works, The Apostolical Institution of the Episcopacy Demonstrated, (London: 1742), p. 390.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 293, (v, 96).

⁴Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 37, (III, 34).

⁵Ibid., pp. 38-39, (III, 40).

nothing else but Talk."¹

There is good reason to believe that Chillingworth's reverence for the sanctity of human life was general and not limited to Christians only. In a short paper entitled "Against punishing Crimes with Death," which was not published until almost two hundred years after his death, Chillingworth pleaded for a system of forced labor in place of capital punishment. Not only would this enable many beneficial public works to be undertaken,² but it would allow men to gain that knowledge and practice of God's will without which there is no salvation.³

For certainly nothing can be more agreeable to charity, than all possible and lawful parsimony of the blood of Christians, nay even of the blood of men; nor anything more apparently repugnant to Christian charity, and the bowels of compassion, and even to humanity itself, than to hurt, much more to destroy any person, unless this severity be necessary, or may at least be useful for the public good: for that were to shed the blood of a man and a Christian to no purpose.⁴

The true reason for this persecution is "our most unchristian overvaluing our worldly goods, which make us provide for their security by any means, and our more unchristian undervaluing the souls of our brethren"⁵ In a

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 79, (ii, 1).

²William Chillingworth, Works, (Oxford: University Press, 1838), III, 436; (This and the next three references only refer to the 1838 edition.)

³Ibid., p. 437.

⁴Ibid., p. 436.

⁵Ibid., p. 438.

letter to a friend he said, "I hope Christians are not forbidden to shew Humanity and Civility even to Pagans."¹ Cheynell holds that this doctrine is a clear indication of the influence of Socinianism by way of Arminianism.²

Likewise, Chillingworth maintained that the profession of Christianity did not entitle a man to a larger share of the goods of this world than that to which the non-Christian was entitled. This doctrine was traduced by those who held that the elect of God were certainly entitled to the goods of this world.³ Chillingworth felt that the Reformed Church had borrowed this doctrine from the Jesuits who used it to justify the Spanish extravagances in the New World.⁴ Any man who thinks that he has a greater claim on the goods of this world than any other man is seeking to "nullify the Gift of God, . . . setting up himself as it were in God's Seat, and dethroning him, establishing a new Order of Providence of his own"⁵

Again and again Chillingworth takes up the notion of the true place of man in creation. It is one of the mainsprings of his controversial method and argument. In

¹William Chillingworth, Works, Reasons Against Popery, (London: 1742), p. 391.

²Cheynell, op. cit., p. 53. ³Ibid., p. 47.

⁴Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 87, (VII, 29).

⁵Ibid., p. 88, (VII, 31).

the disagreements that arise between men, all of whom share the same erring nature, it is not possible to propose any "human decisive Judges, nor any Sect or Person, but only God and his Word."¹ If Christians do have one head over all, that head is only Christ, not any living man,² for Christians are required to call no man master but Christ.³ Do not require heavier conditions than God, but, rather, allow God to have his way.⁴ When men set themselves up as judges, the universality of the church is destroyed.⁵

This complete denial of the authority of men in the realm of religion is aptly illustrated in a story which Cheynell relates from the last days of Chillingworth. He writes of Chillingworth:

When I found him pretty hearty one day, I desired him to tell me, whether he conceived that a man living and dying a Turk, Papist, or Socinian, could be saved? All the answer that I could gaine from him was, that he did not absolve them, and would not condemne them.⁶

Chillingworth's answer indicates that he had caught an

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 174, (iii, 62).

²Ibid., pp. 120-121, (ii, 143).

³Ibid., p. 204, (iv, 17); p. 220, (iv, 53).

⁴Ibid., pp. 183-184, (iii, 81). ⁵Ibid.

⁶Francis Cheynell, CHILLINGWORTH'S NOVISSIMA or, the Sicknesse, Heresy, Death and Buriall of William Chillingworth, (London: 1644), p. 25.

essential point in the understanding of man, that is, his limitation. Man, when he remains true to his humanity, does not take upon him the task reserved for God. This story, which seems true to the spirit of Chillingworth, means that toleration must be extended to all if men are not to take more upon themselves than is allowed to them.

In his discussion of the Church, Chillingworth also dwells on the limitations imposed by its humanity. The church is always a local society composed of individual men and has the same freedom and limitations that apply to men.¹ In fact he often compares the Church to a man.² It is obvious that such a church must severely limit its activity, taking great care never to confuse the expedient way with the will of God. God has not left it to men to determine what particulars they are to believe.³ Therefore the Church must observe a self-limitation and refrain from doing evil in order to avoid evil, for not all apparent means by which inconveniences may be avoided are lawful.⁴ The Church is limited because men are limited. The conclusion must be that the Church must not stray from its one

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 120, (ii, 142); p. 127, (ii, 158); p. 156, (iii, 30); p. 290, (v, 93).

²Ibid., p. 182, (iii, 78); p. 331, (vi, 18).

³Ibid., p. 120, (ii, 142). ⁴Ibid., p. 281, (v, 72).

commission: to preach the gospel.¹

Likewise, Chillingworth believed the Church to be limited because God has not promised men a Church which is altogether free from error; "and therefore [we] may not promise such a one to our selves."² The claim that any one church is infallible is tying God to the imaginations of men; it is forgetting that God has given his direction to the Church; it is a failure to allow God his own way in dealing with his people.³ Even the universal Church may fail to be infallible except in fundamentals, while private churches and individual men are fallible in all points.⁴ This erring Church may not claim an authority of its own so that there must be a great measure of freedom within it and, indeed, freedom to be out of it.

The Church, and by this he means any particular Church, or the Church catholic, cannot be rationally believed "for her own Sake, and upon her own Word and Authority in any Thing, . . . For an Authority subject to Error can be no firm or stable Foundation of my Belief in any Thing" ⁵ Therefore, to ask any man to

¹Ibid., pp. 211-212, (iv, 38).

²Ibid., p. 120, (ii, 140). ³Ibid., (ii, 141).

⁴Ibid., pp. 128-129, (ii, 162).

⁵Ibid., p. 160, (iii, 36).

remain in a church which holds a belief contrary to his private conscience is to require a man to act against his rational nature, which is damnable.¹ For men to abide in any error, whether it is fundamentally destructive of the truth of God or not, is very nearly the sin against the Holy Ghost.²

Chillingworth did not leave the matter in this vague state, but went further, building upon the idea of conscience and suggesting that it might often be necessary and justifiable for a man to leave one church for another, or for none at all. He held it entirely possible that the whole world with the exception of one man might be in the wrong. This man must then leave all the others for the sake of those things which violate his conscience.³ It is perfectly possible that the visible Church may fall into a state wherein she may be opposed.⁴ The will of God is that men should "offend all the World, rather than sin in the least Matter . . . certainly it is not his Will, that we should err with the Church, or if we do not, that we should against Conscience profess the Errors of it."⁵ Men are to "for-sake Men rather than God; leave the Church's Communion

¹Ibid., p. 276, (v, 59); p. 278, (v, 62).

²Ibid., p. 279, (v, 64). ³Ibid., p. 288, (v, 89).

⁴Ibid., p. 130, (ii, 165). ⁵Ibid., p. 281, (v, 70).

rather than commit Sin" ¹ Men are to draw close to Christ whatever way this may take them. ² Men are not to fear that some men, in leaving a Church, have fallen into damnable error:

This is, just as if you should say, Divers Men have fallen into Scylla, with going too far from Charybdis; be sure therefore you keep close to Charybdis: . . . this therefore ought to deter Men from leaving Superstition or Idolatry, for fear of falling into Atheism and Impiety but God says clean contrary, Take heed you swerve not either to the right Hand or to the left; you must not do Evil that Good may come thereon; therefore neither, that you may avoid a greater Evil; you must not be obstinate in a certain Error, for fear of an uncertain and therefore [we] cannot but conceive those Fears to be most foolish and ridiculous, which persuade Men to be constant in one Way to Hell, lest haply, if they leave it, they should fall into another. ³

The conclusion is that a man may justifiably leave any church that requires him to practise any error whatsoever. ⁴ If this leaves the way open to innumerable sects and schisms, then this result must be allowed. ⁵ This conclusion is the natural result of the Reformation, as the very existence of the Reformers was a virtual denial of the theological theory of persecution. ⁶

¹Ibid., p. 280, (v, 68); cf. p. 281, (v, 71).

²Ibid., p. 18, (preface, 21).

³Ibid., pp. 174-175, (iii, 63).

⁴Ibid., p. 283, (v, 78).

⁵Ibid., p. 281, (v, 72). ⁶Lyon, op. cit., p. 19.

Chillingworth admitted that the argument from conscience may be abused, but he held that this must not mean that it is to be disallowed.¹ When the conscience is made supreme "it concerns every Man who separates from any Church's Communion, even as much as his Salvation is worth, to look most carefully to it, that the Cause of his Separation be just and necessary; for unless it be necessary, it can hardly be sufficient."² The burden of proof always rests upon the schismatic; it is more than a question of pretence.³ Separation from a church is an act that may be performed only by the informed and truthful conscience: it is not simply a device by which any man may leave any practice which happens to displease him.⁴

Chillingworth did not build much upon the conception of the invisible Church, but he did hold that there is a valid distinction between the visible Church and a visible Church. It was a major contention with him that no one denomination is to be equated with the visible Church. Each denomination is not "the visible Church", but only a visible Church; not the whole Catholick, but only a part

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 281, (v, 71).

²Ibid., p. 273, (v, 53).

³Ibid., p. 281, (v, 71).

⁴Ibid., p. 284, (v, 80).

of it."¹ There may be true parts of the church which do not join with it in all things.² The union of the true Church is not in place, nor in external communion; "but by the Union of Faith and Charity."³ It cannot be proven that leaving one church is the same as leaving the whole Church until it can be shown "that a Sinner cannot leave his sin, without ceasing to be a Man: or that he that is part of any Society, cannot renounce any Vice of that Society, but he must relinquish the Society."⁴ A man may then separate himself from any one or all churches and not cease to be a member of the Church catholic:

to leave the Church, and to leave the external communion of a Church, . . . is not the same thing: That being done by ceasing to be a member of it, by ceasing to have those requisites which constitute a man a member of it, as Faith and Obedience: This, by refusing to communicate with any Church in her Liturgies and publick Worship of God.⁵

The distinction between the visible Church and a visible Church means that there may be many societies of men which may be called churches. The same situation would have

¹Ibid., pp. 268, (v, 32); cf., p. 171, (iii, 56).

²Ibid., p. 292, (v, 95); p. 273, (v, 50); William Chillingworth, Works, Additional Discourses, (fifth edition; London: 1742), p. 140.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, pp. 274-275, (v, 56).

⁴Ibid., p. 272, (v, 47).

⁵Ibid., p. 268, (v, 32); cf., p. 271, (v, 45); p. 273, (v, 54).

obtained had Chillingworth chosen to speak of the invisible Church: when the true Church is invisible, then many separate societies may bear the name church.¹ Thus Chillingworth was building his idea of a comprehensive Church on an understanding of the Church gained from the English Reformers.

Chillingworth would tolerate no persecution of any church that believed the Apostles' Creed. To lay the foundation in the Creed in which all can agree, "cannot in all Reason, but do infinite Service, both to the Truth of Christ, and the Peace of Christendom."² He must certainly say that men are to remain unmolested so long as they maintain membership in some one society of Christians which has the notes of a visible church; "true Preaching of the Word, and due Administration of the Sacraments . . ."³

It must be added here that although Chillingworth was willing to pronounce an anathema against the Socinians,⁴ he was not willing to persecute them because of his admir-

¹H. F. Woodhouse, The Doctrine of the Church in Anglican Theology, (London: Church Historical Society, 1954), p. 52.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 202, (iv, 13).

³Ibid., p. 266, (v, 26).

⁴Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 58, (V, 29).

ation for the quality of their lives¹ and because of his hatred of any type of persecution.

Holding as he did the two ideas: hatred of persecution, and the belief that there was no necessity to have a Church united into one denomination; what did Chillingworth conceive to be the goal of the Church of his day? The foremost thing that he desired was peace among the churches and the liberty which Christ left to his followers.² Chillingworth clearly did not believe uniformity to be a possible goal in his time. Unlike Laud, he was interested in the unity of all Protestants.³ Also unlike Laud, he did not make the error of equating unity with uniformity.⁴ This view was reinforced by his belief that necessity and freedom cannot stand together; God has established freedom as a part of his dealing with man, and men cannot reverse the law of God.⁵ You cannot "necessitate Men to believe aright, without taking away their Free-will in believing, and in professing their

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 21, (preface, 29).

²Ibid., p. 202, (iv, 13).

³Hugh Trevor-Roper, Archbishop Laud, (London: MacMillan and Company, 1940), p. 200.

⁴Lyon, op. cit., p. 66.

⁵Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 105, (ii, 93).

Belief."¹ Force will only produce uniformity, not unity, and make everlasting the worst divisions of Christendom.² Uniformity requires force to make it operative, and this Chillingworth would have forbidden. Thus uniformity as the goal of the Church was not tenable in his view.

It is not possible to produce unity of communion among Christians "by taking away the Diversity of Opinions touching Matters of Religion."³ If it cannot be done without a miracle by which "it could be made evident to all Men, that God hath appointed some visible Judge of Controversies, to whose Judgment all Men are to submit themselves,"⁴ how then can it be done?

The alternative to a forced uniformity of the Church, and the only road actually open by which the unity of the Church may be established, is "by shewing that the Diversity of Opinions, which is among several Sects of Christians, ought to be no Hinderance to their Unity in Communion."⁵ There is no man or society of men who is fit to pronounce an "obliging" sentence on all the world: "And therefore

¹Ibid., p. 106, (ii, 96). ²Ibid., p. 292, (v, 96).

³Ibid., p. 212, (iv, 39).

⁴Ibid., p. 212, (iv, 40); cf., p. 60, (i, 11); p. 82, (ii, 10, 11); p. 103, (ii, 85); p. 118, (ii, 136); p. 146, (iii, 7); p. 161, (iii, 41); p. 177, (iii, 69); pp. 211-212, (iv, 38).

⁵Ibid., p. 212, (iv, 39).

though we wish heartily, that all Controversies were ended, as we do, that all Sins were abolish'd, yet we have little Hope of one, or the other, 'till the World be ended"¹

The whole emphasis of men is wrong. Is it not true that

Christians must be taught to set a Higher Value upon these high Points of Faith, and Obedience wherein they agree, than upon those Matters of less moment wherein they differ; and understand that Agreement in these ought to be more effectual to join in one Communion, than their Difference in other Things of less moment to divide them?²

From his point of view, Chillingworth did not feel that a divided church was a real hindrance to belief, since he could learn from the common consent of all churches.³ Even though Christians do hold this common body of beliefs, there should be an active seeking to come together, even at cost to one another:

St. Dennis of Alexandria, says indeed and very well, that all things should be rather endured, than we should consent to the division of the Church: I would add rather than consent to the continuation of the division, if it might be remedied.⁴

The alternative that Chillingworth envisaged to a divided church was participation of all Christians with all other Christians in those things wherein they do agree:

When I say, in one Communion, I mean in a common Profession of those Articles of Faith, wherein all

¹Ibid., p. 103, (ii, 85). ²Ibid., p. 212, (iv, 40).

³Ibid., pp. 107-108, (ii, 101).

⁴Ibid., p. 262, (v, 12).

consent: A joint Worship of God, after such a Way as all esteem lawful; and a mutual Performance of those Works of Charity, which Christians owe to one another.¹

This was far from an appeal to Christians to unite in one large sect. For Chillingworth, like Laud, did not approve of the writings of David Waengler (Pareus), although this man was mightily interested in the reunion of the churches.² The reunion that Chillingworth hoped for was a reunion in love; it was not necessarily a union of all theological opinions and could not be called an appeal for eclecticism. He was "willing to leave all Men to their Liberty, provided they will not improve it to a Tyranny over others"³ In this type of church union, intolerance would cease to be a virtue.

Two basic concepts lie behind this latitudinarian understanding of the church: (1) Christians have, in the Bible, the means to agree; and (2) everything beyond this is mere opinion and can be left to the individual to determine as he pleases.

Chillingworth delivered these two reasons as an argument against those who maintained that the discords among Protestants were an indication that they had no means

¹Ibid., p. 212, (iv, 40).

²Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 64, (V, 53).

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 183, (iii, 81).

of agreement.¹ As a matter of fact, discord among Christians is due to the fact that they fail to recognize these basic principles of agreement.²

When Christians accept the Bible as the basis of their faith, "those Divine Verities speculative and practical, wherein they universally agree, . . . amount to many Millions, . . . " and their differences are not "so great as to exclude the opposite Parties from being Members of the Church militant, and Joint-heirs of the Glory of the Church triumphant."³ Thus Chillingworth can say that if one church believes all the fundamentals and is assured that another church holds this same basis with them, then the first does not differ from the second in anything fundamental.⁴ "So that, notwithstanding their Differences, . . . the same Heaven may receive them All."⁵

Thus, for Chillingworth, the Scripture serves the cause of toleration: "holding the Scripture to be the sole Rule of Faith: . . ." does not oblige men to "pronounce them damned, that oppose any least Point delivered in Scripture."⁶ The Bible is a rule and power only among

¹Ibid., p. 145, (iii, 2). ²Ibid., p. 184, (iii, 81).

³Ibid., pp. 218-219, (iv, 49). ⁴Ibid., p. 374, (vii, 14).

⁵Ibid., p. 47, (answer to preface, 27).

⁶Ibid., p. 62, (i, 13).

those who believe in its unique nature and cannot be used outside the faith.¹ Chillingworth reverses the usual viewpoint of Christians of his time and sees in the Bible the means of agreement among Christians. At the same time he does not believe that the Bible demands an intolerant attitude toward those who refuse to accept it.²

Chillingworth believed wholeheartedly that the authority of the Bible is only binding upon individuals. The revelation of God was committed to men by Christ and it continues to be the property of individual men."³ Therefore, the only interpreter of the Scriptures is the individual man.⁴ These concepts, that Christians have the means to agree in the Bible and that it is to be interpreted by individuals when they are brought together, give a powerful stimulus to the concept of toleration.

The second motive for the conception of a broad Church is a corollary to the first. It is that Christians should give a wide scope to individual belief. The real unity of the Church is destroyed because men do not allow this latitude to individuals, or to other churches. The

¹Ibid., pp. 126-127, (ii. 156).

²John Tulloch, Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century, (William Blackwood and Sons: Edinburgh, 1872), I, 28.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 123, (ii, 148).

⁴Ibid., p. 78, (ii, 1).

churches do not pray that God will bring them to the true religion, but that he will confirm them in their own opinions;¹ they are, in fact, like the frog in the fable who thought the ditch he lived in to be the whole world.²

The real difficulty, as Chillingworth saw it, was that men term their private opinions "Matters of Faith"³ That is, men are apt to call their own private peculiarities matters of faith and thus overvalue them,⁴ or they differ over those points on which God has not declared himself.⁵ As a matter of fact, all the conflicts among Protestants are in the realm of opinion: "in all the Controversies of Protestants, there is a seeming conflict of Scripture with Scripture, Reason with Reason, Authority with Authority: Which how it can consist with the manifest Revealing of the Truth of either Side, I cannot well understand."⁶ Therefore, he concludes, that all questions may either be decided by Scripture or they are not capable of resolution.⁷

In the matter of opinions, God has left every man to his liberty.⁸ Christians should think charitably of their

¹Ibid., p. 127, (ii, 157). ²Ibid., p. 360, (vi, 53).

³Ibid., p. 62, (i, 13). ⁴Ibid., p. 60, (i, 10).

⁵Ibid., pp. 38-39, (answer to preface, 10).

⁶Ibid., p. 151, (iii, 19).

⁷Ibid., pp. 126-127, (ii, 156).

⁸Ibid., p. 109, (ii, 103).

brother's opinions.¹ The outcome of faith is not dependent on these opinions: "I may hold my Opinion, and do you no wrong; and you you'rs, and do me none" ² In any case, there is no judge appointed by God to make a decision in these differing opinions; men cannot require more of their fellow men than God.³ Christians are therefore required to be tolerant of the opinions of their fellow Christians. Chillingworth gives a firm declaration of his own resolve in this matter:

I will take no Man's Liberty of Judgment from him; neither shall any Man take mine from me. I will think no Man the worse Man, nor the worse Christian, I will love no Man the less, for differing in Opinion from me.⁴

In this development of the bases of toleration, Chillingworth seems to owe a large debt to the mood of the Socinians for, like them, he felt it inconsistent to force his private opinions on other men.⁵ This is consistent with Chillingworth's doubts about the efficaciousness of human belief and his emphasis on the moral qualification for justification.

The toleration that Chillingworth argued for was a toleration within the whole Church universal. It is a

¹Ibid., p. 382, (vii, 33). ²Ibid., p. 85, (ii, 20).

³Ibid., p. 109, (ii, 103-104). ⁴Ibid., p. 354, (vi, 56).

⁵Cf., J.B. Bury, A History of the Freedom of Thought, (second edition; Home University Library, London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 73.

logical extension of the sixteenth century Anglican belief that latitude of belief and practice was to be permitted within the local or the national church.¹ Based as it is on the distinction between fundamentals and non-fundamentals, it is not to be likened to the growing congregationalism which allowed men to differ freely on religious questions by separation.² It cannot therefore be called indifference to Christian theology and practice.³

However, Chillingworth must certainly have advocated the general toleration of all Creeds, Christian and non-Christian, if his remarks concerning the use of force are accorded their full meaning. He likewise maintained that the Story of Cornelius in Acts 9 demonstrates that Cornelius was accepted by God for the present state of his gentilism.⁴ This, when carried to its logical conclusion, means that other men are accepted by God in the same way. Likewise, the story related by Cheynell might possibly be taken to

¹Woodhouse, op. cit., p. 121.

²Cf., W. K. Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936), II, 221.

³Cf., W. K. Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, (London: George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1932), I, 15-16; Tulloch, op. cit., II, 458.

⁴Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, pp. 148-149, (iii, 13).

mean that a general toleration of all religions was to be permitted. Chillingworth, however, answered Knott very directly concerning the charge that "Men may be saved in any Religion . . ."¹ He maintained that his division of Christianity into points fundamental and non-fundamental exonerated him from the charge of being "a Friend to Indifference in Religion,"² for those men who oppose an essential part of the gospel of Christ may be justly called heretics.³ He also seems to maintain that belief in the truths of the Bible may be required of everyone.⁴ The ultimate meaning of these statements is summed up by Calamy: "Such principles as these, . . . appeared to me to go a great way towards the justifying of moderate non-conformity."⁵

There are in Chillingworth's works a few indications of how this toleration would work in practice and what it would mean to the life of the Church. It would mean, first of all, that the distinctions between orthodox and schismatic, or orthodox and heretical, would largely disappear

¹Ibid., p. 371, (vii, 8).

²Ibid., p. 35, (answer to preface, 3).

³Ibid., p. 329, (vi, 12).

⁴Ibid., p. 355, (vi, 56); cf., Colligan, op. cit., p. 8.

⁵Edmund Calamy, An Historical Account of My Own Life, with Some Reflections on the Times I Have Lived in, (second edition; London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bently, 1830), I, 234.

from Christian thought. When two churches differ with one another, it is not necessary that one of them be heretical.¹ The Church appeared to Chillingworth to be more true to its function the fewer men that it cuts off from God.² The duty of the Church is positive: it is to embrace all men who belong to the invisible Church. Men's salvation does not depend on other men but wholly upon the goodness of God.³ Therefore he concludes that a man who leaves the external communion of a church is not necessarily either a heretic or a schismatic.⁴

Chillingworth would not, therefore, call other men heretics: "For there is no incongruity, but it may be true, That You and We cannot both be saved? And yet as true, That without Uncharitableness you cannot pronounce us damn'd."⁵ The true Christian will actively seek out those who are not members of the true Church: "That all those which a Christian is to esteem Neighbours do concur to make up one Company, which is the Church." Which is false;

¹Chillingworth, Additional Discourses, p. 133.

²Tulloch, op. cit., II, 3.

³Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, pp. 98-99, (ii, 68).

⁴Ibid., p. 261, (v, 9); p. 266, (v, 25); pp. 273-274, (v, 54); p. 334, (vi, 21).

⁵Ibid., p. 34, (answer to preface, 2).

for a Christian is to esteem those his neighbours, who are not Members of the true Church."¹ True heretics may be rooted out of the Church, but not out of the world. They are put "out of the Church into the World, where we may converse with them freely, without scandal to the Church."² The command of Christ is to allow the tares to grow together with the good grain. His treatment of heretics is almost exactly parallel to that which he desired for criminals, they must be brought back to the truth of God and not cut off finally from that love.

Toleration is the only rational answer to schism and heresy, as he tells his Jesuit opponent:

seeing there are Contentions among us, we are taught by Nature Scripture and Experience (so you tell us out of Mr. Hooker) to seek for the Ending of them, by submitting unto some judicial Sentence, whereunto neither part may refuse to stand. This is very true. Neither should you need to persuade us to seek such a Means of ending all our Controversies, if we could tell where to find it. But this we know, that none is fit to pronounce for all the World a judicial definitive obliging Sentence in Controversies of Religion, but only such a Man, or a Society of Men, as is authorized thereto by God. And besides, we are able to demonstrate, that it hath not been the Pleasure of God to give to any Man, or Society of Men, any such Authority In the mean while, think it best to content ourselves with, and to persuade others unto, an Unity of Charity, and Mutual Toleration; seeing God hath authorized no Man to force all to Unity of Opinion.³

¹Ibid., p. 260, (v, 5). ²Ibid., p. 275, (v, 57).

³Ibid., p. 103, (ii, 85).

That is, if men would accept the fact that

all necessary Truths are plainly and evidently set down in Scripture, there would of necessity be among all Men, in all Things necessary, Unity of Opinion? and, notwithstanding any other Differences that are or could be, Unity of Communion, and Charity, and mutual Toleration? by which means all Schism and Heresy would be banished the World, and those wretched Contentions which now rend and tear in Pieces, not the Coat, but the Members and Bowels of Christ with mutual Pride and Tyranny, and Cursing, and Killing, and Damning, would fain make immortal, should speedily receive a most blessed Catastrophe.¹

Toleration would work if men

would be themselves, and be content that others should be in the choice of their Religion, the Servants of God, and not of Men; if they would allow, that the Way to Heaven is not narrower now, than when Christ left it, his Yoke no heavier than he made it; that the Belief of no more difficulties is required now to Salvation, than was in the Primitive Church; that no Error is in itself destructive, and exclusive from Salvation now, which was not then; if instead of being zealous Papists, earnest Calvinists, rigid Lutherans, they would become themselves, and be content that others should be plain and honest Christians²

In general, Chillingworth is making a plea to his fellow Christians to allow God to be God and men to be men.

Chillingworth did not enjoin this toleration as a positive duty of the state, but he did put it negatively and ask the state to forego any claim to pursue religion for reasons of political expediency. He did not understand "how it can be any way advantagious to Civil Government, that Men without Warrant from God should usurp a Tyranny over

¹Ibid., p. 184, (iii, 81). ²Ibid.

other Mens Consciences, and prescribe unto them, without Reason, and sometimes against Reason, what they shall believe?"¹ What can follow from such a practice, "but perhaps in the judgment of carnal Policy, the temporal Benefit and Tranquility of temporal States and Kingdoms, but the infinite Prejudice, if not the Desolation, of the Kingdom of Christ?"² The state has the right to use power in two cases only: (1) where disobedience to the lawful authority of the state is taught or licensed, and (2) where there is danger to the state by forcing others to religion.³

There is no Danger to any State from any Man's Opinion; unless it be such an Opinion by which Disobedience to Authority, or Impiety, is taught or licensed; which Sort, I confess, may justly be punished as well as other Faults; or, unless this sanguinary Doctrine be joined with it, that it is lawful for him by human Violence to enforce others to it.⁴

This doctrine, that the state may not force religion, is linked in Chillingworth's mind with the obedience which is necessary to faith:

And therefore it well becomes them who have their Portions in this Life, who serve no higher State than that of England, or Spain, or France, nor this neither,

¹Ibid., p. 115, (ii, 122).

²Ibid., p. 292, (v, 96).

³Lyon, op. cit., p. 176.

⁴Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, pp. 292-293, (v, 96).

any further than they may serve themselves by it; who think of no other Happiness but the Preservation of their own Fortunes and Tranquillity in this World; who think of no other Means to preserve States, but human Power and Machiavellian Policy, and believe no other Creed but this, Regi aut Civitati imperium habenti nihil injustum quod utile: Such men as these it may become to maintain by worldly Power and Violence their State-instrument, Religion But they that are indeed Servants and Lovers of Christ, of Truth, of the Church, and of Mankind, ought with all Courage to oppose themselves against it They that know there is a King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, by whose Will and Pleasure Kings and Kingdoms stand and fall; they know that to no King or State any Thing can be profitable which is unjust; and that nothing can be more evidently unjust, than to force weak Men by the Profession of a Religion which they believe not, to lose their own eternal Happiness, out of a vain and needless Fear, lest they may possibly disturb their temporal Quietness.¹

The end of the state is peace in this world, while the end of true religion is truth and eternal happiness and these two ends, while not mutually exclusive, are not to be confused. If men are allowed to pursue religion freely, neither they nor the state will be the worse for it.

The virtue of toleration is in the freedom that it gives men to approach the abstract virtue of truth in their own way: "it is better for Men to go to Heaven by diverse Ways, or rather by diverse Paths of the same Way, than in the same Path to go on peaceably to Hell, Amica Pax, magis amica Veritas!"² The toleration of many churches is not destructive of true religion "if the Walls of Separation,

¹Ibid., p. 292, (v, 96). ²Ibid., p. 282, (v, 72).

whereby the Devil hopes to make their Divisions eternal, were pulled down; and Error were not supported against Truth, by human Advantages."¹ "For seeing Falshood and Error could not long stand against the Power of Truth, were they not supported by Tyranny and worldly Advantage, he that could assert Christians to that Liberty which Christ and his Apostles left them, must needs do Truth a most heroical Service."² To be tolerant means to remove all the human requirements and impositions on faith and thereby allow all men to go directly to the truth:

In a word, take away Tyranny, which is the Devils Instrument to support errors and superstitions, and impieties, in the several parts of the World, which could not otherwise long withstand the power of Truth; I say, take away Tyranny, and restore Christians to their just and full Liberty of captivating their Understanding to Scripture only, and as Rivers, when they have a free passage, run all to the Ocean, so it may well be hoped by God's blessing, that Universal Liberty thus moderated, may quickly reduce Christendom to Truth and Unity.³

¹Ibid., p. 218, (iv, 19). ²Ibid., p. 202, (iv, 13).

³Ibid., p. 204, (iv, 16).

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Up to this point no attempt has been made to present Chillingworth's thought as a consistent whole. It is therefore necessary to begin a critical examination of his thought and place in the history of theology with a short summary of the relevant material, that is, to paraphrase the central ideas that govern and lend consistency to his writing.

All of Chillingworth's writings present a similar view of the niche and function of man in his society. At all points this view is dictated by the analogy that he used to demonstrate the nature of human life. Human life is a pilgrimage from birth to the beatific vision. This human pilgrimage of faith is therefore comparable to the trip from Oxford to London. Man is a free being whose whole life is a search for the correct route to eternal life. Just as there is more than one way to London from Oxford and more than one means of accomplishing that journey, there are diverse paths from birth to eternal happiness. Each and every man makes his own choice of the right path by means of a free and rational examination of all the possible routes. The free man always makes the correct choice at every fork in the way because

he has implanted in him a determination to go the right way. All of this means of course that man is a completely self-contained unit, that he is rationally autonomous.

God, who has ordained this pattern for the life of man, is a good God. He is the God of truth, or ~~He~~ ^{He} is the truth ~~itself~~ in its ~~inter~~al form. Truth is always triumphant in the battle with falsehood. Thus it is that the man who is resolutely allied and attached to the truth will always emerge victoriously at the beatific vision. Men have access to God's truth in ~~his~~ book called the Bible. These written truths are in keeping with the nature of the good God who gave them, because they are intelligible to both the educated and the uneducated.

Jesus Christ is the true Son of God, himself a rational man, and the expression of God's own rational being. Christ has himself followed the same way that men are to follow. Moreover, Christ has made it possible for men to walk in the path of complete rationality, whereas before Christ, men were not able to take the way established for them.

The Church represents the earthly society of men who are dedicated to the truth of God. As God's Church, it is ordained to lead men into the path of true rational experience with God. Since it is a society of rational men dedicated to the truth of God, the Church should be a comprehensive institution. The Church consults only with

the truths of God as they are written in Holy Scripture and teaches men to use them as a guide to matters of intellectual assent in faith and as a guide for action in the world.

Essentially, Chillingworth's thought embraces only these few categories. Almost all of his work is the extension of these ideas which he used in the combat with the Church of Rome.

In attempting to make a critical evaluation of Chillingworth's contribution to the literature of theology it is well, in the first place, to note that he himself placed a stricture on the attempt. He held, of course, that men are excused from all error arising out of ignorance, but further than that he inquired of his Jesuit opponent: "Have you so little Charity, as to say, that Men are justly chargeable with all the Consequences of their Opinions? Such Consequences, I mean, as they do not own, but disclaim" ¹ It was a part of his eminent fairness in controversy that Chillingworth was willing to treat others in this way and tried again and again to determine no more than the meaning intended by his opponent.

Chillingworth was primarily a controversialist. The story of his life has been clouded over by the passage of

¹William Chillingworth, Works, The Religion of Protestants, a Safe Way to Salvation, (tenth edition; London: 1742), p. 61, (i, 12).

time and the animosities that surrounded his every movement. If the testimony of his own time is a reliable guide, it would seem that he was almost universally disliked - even hated - by his contemporaries. This hatred even extended to those men on whose side he fought during the Civil War. The most recent examination of his influence on Lord Falkland is for the most part sharply critical.¹ Nevertheless, Chillingworth would maintain that throughout his life he had been rational, that is logical, according to the principles of his education.² These rational principles, he would further maintain, are common to all expressions of the Christian faith.

Chillingworth pictured himself as a man who was seeking the middle-way in life and in the exposition of Christian truth. He attacked the Roman Catholic Church with all of his logical power, but he did not defend all that had been done in the name of Protestantism. Men ought, he thought, always to give to the words of other men the fairest possible construction and meaning: "Every Man ought to be presumed to speak Sense, rather than Nonsense; coherently rather than contradictously, if his Words be fairly capable of a better Construction seeing it is a Matter of such extreme Difficulty, to hold such a Temper in opposing one extreme

¹Kurt Weber, Lucius Cary, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), pp. 157-212.

²Chillingworth, op. cit., p. 297, (v, 103).

Opinion, as not to seem to favour another."¹ Therefore, true to the Anglican tradition, Chillingworth did not consider that he was doing any more than staying with the central principles of the Church of England, and, consequently, of all Christians.

Therefore Chillingworth can only be fairly interpreted as he stands in the Anglican tradition. It is in this Church better than any other that his principles can be conceived.² Standing in this tradition he had no great master to look back upon and no ordered logical system on which he could build a really constructive apologetic against the claims of the Church of Rome.³ A true son of the Church of England, Chillingworth stands in the conservative tradition of that Church by virtue of the freedom that he exhibited in hearkening only to the Bible and his refusal to stand by the more radical statements of the Reformers.⁴ His writing is characteristic of the Anglican theology under the Stuarts which waged war on two fronts, that is, against Rome and

¹Ibid., pp. 301-302, (v, 109).

²Maurice Ashley, Seventeenth Century England, (Vol. VI of the Pelican History of England. second edition; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1954), p. 109.

³A. T. P. Williams, The Anglican Tradition in the Life of England, (Religious Book Club edition; London: S. C. M. Press, 1947), p. 13.

⁴Chillingworth, op. cit., p. 220, (iv, 53).

against the more extreme forms of Protestantism.¹

It is a mistake to picture this war against the two extremes of Christian doctrine as a mild attack. "Broadness of doctrine which attacks the fanatic and narrow-minded with such zeal and relentlessness as that used by the King and the Archbishop is itself a tyranny. Chillingworth's noble words . . . sounded oddly against the background of silenced ministers, pilloried critics and resentful Scots."² However, since times such as these were not productive of moderate statements, it is noteworthy that Chillingworth's book is not more disfigured by the troubles of the times. The issues which called for The Religion of Protestants were not theological only. There were complex political and social issues which also convulsed the whole of Britain in those days. Chillingworth was politically conservative. He was as interested in preserving the monarchy and the ancient English traditions as he was interested in Protestantism.³ Witness his "Observations upon the Scottish Declaration"⁴ and "The Beginning of a Treatise against the

¹Williams, op. cit., p. 32.

²C. V. Wedgewood, The Kings Peace, (London: Collins, 1955), p. 191.

³William Chillingworth, Works, Sermons, (ninth edition; London: 1742), pp. 1-14, (I).

⁴Lambeth Palace Library, Lambeth MS, 943, pp. 887-893.

Scots,"¹ both written against a nation whose alleged intent was to preserve the cause of Calvinistic Protestantism.

Thus, in the background of Chillingworth's tolerant spirit is a deep-seated conservatism from which his tolerant concepts may ultimately spring. In any case he was writing in defence of the established church and his ideas carried weight with those in positions of power in the establishment. It is also true that these ideas may have been viewed as the establishment's method of retaining the balance of power in a divided church.

In spite of the one sided nature of Chillingworth's great book, his work continued to be popular for over two-hundred years. Men are not found wanting who refer to him as one of the greatest thinkers ever to grace the English religious scene. Archbishop Tillotson referred to him as "that incomparable Person Mr. Chillingworth, the glory of this Age and Nation" ² Calamy called him "the greatest champion the Protestant cause ever had" ³

¹Ibid., p. 879.

²Quoted by P. Des Maizeaux, An Historical and Critical Account of the Life and Writings of William Chillingworth, (London: 1725), p. 372.

³Edmund Calamy, An Historical Account of My Own Life, with Some Reflections on the Times I Have Lived in, (second edition; London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bently, 1830), pp. 227-228.

Clarendon, too, although his opinion may have been colored by personal friendship, maintained that Chillingworth, together with Laud, had done more to advance the Protestant cause in writing than any others since the Reformation.¹ In the nineteenth century, Tulloch said that The Religion of Protestants "claims first to be considered by us as one of the most notable productions of English literature."² It remains, although in a less degree than the great work of Hooker, a living force in general literature--a permanent monument of thought marking the advance of the human mind in the loftiest of all directions."³ A more recent critic is more cautious, saying that Chillingworth's book was "by far the most distinguished work produced in a long controversy between Anglicans and Roman Catholics which extended from 1630-1652."⁴

This more recent and temperate remark comes closer to accounting for Chillingworth's popularity. Controversy is now out of fashion and Chillingworth's work has suffered in

¹Edward Hyde, The Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon, (Oxford: Clarendon Printing House, 1759), I, 118.

²John Tulloch, Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1872), I, 308.

³Ibid., I, 315.

⁴T. Lyon, The Theory of Religious Liberty in England 1603-1639, (Cambridge: University Press, 1937), p. 164.

that decline. In spite of the glowing account given by Tulloch, who rates Chillingworth a greater writer than Taylor and as good as Baxter at his best,¹ Chillingworth's works are not now valued for their literary merits. It is only in rare passages that Chillingworth may be accounted a good writer. On the whole his style is too crabbed and terse for modern ears. However, at those points where he frees himself from the controversy and moves on to examine his own life and relate that experience to the matter at hand, he vastly improves. Now and again he also relieves the tedium of the argument with passages of sarcastic humor which have more of the flavor of oral repartee than of written discourse. It is true, also, that the book is marked by repetition and his personal defence of Potter. In order to escape these drawbacks the work was published in a greatly condensed form in 1687.

As controversy, the popularity of Chillingworth's book was partly due to the eminent fairness with which he treated his opponent.² Chillingworth, for the most part, refrained from a personal attack upon Knott. His conscious design was to take the controversy out of the realm of personalities and

¹Tulloch, op. cit., I, 317.

²Douglas Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600-1660, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945), p. 327; Tulloch, op. cit., p. 311.

to treat only the real issues. In the third paragraph of the Preface he addresses his opponent thus: "This therefore I undertook with a full Resolution to be an Adversary to your Errors, but a Friend and Servant to your Person: and so much more a Friend to your Person, by how much severer and more rigid Adversary I was to your Errors."¹

More than anything else, it is the display of rigid logic which has accounted for Chillingworth's continued popularity. Locke thought that it was the greatest logical work in the English language.² Chillingworth did not, says Bishop Barlow, excell others of his time in knowledge of the Fathers, or of Councils, or of languages: "But his Excellency wherein he excell'd many (if not most) Writers, did arise from, and consist in his Logick, both natural; and (by exceeding great Industry) acquired."³ Thus Chillingworth's appeal was the greatest during the period when men worshipped at the throne of Aristotelian logic. Chillingworth's popularity has waned now that that logic is no longer accorded the same high place.

As famous as Chillingworth's book is as an example of

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 10, (preface, 3).

²Des Maizeaux, op. cit., pp. 370-371.

³Thomas Barlow, The Genuine Remains of that Learned Prelate Dr. Thomas Barlow Late Lord Bishop of Lincoln, (London: 1693), p. 348.

logical method, it is not the method that is of primary importance, but the important feature is the doctrine of man and faith that emerge in Chillingworth's defence of Protestantism.

In spite of his repudiation of the charge that "Nothing ought or can be certainly believed, further than it may be proved by evidence of natural Reason (where . . . natural Reason is opposed to supernatural Revelation) . . . ,"¹ Chillingworth may be described as a rationalist. He had a naive confidence in the power of human reason. So powerful was this confidence in Reason that it led him to present a picture of man as rationally autonomous. It is reason that provides the essential substance of man. It was from the fact that men are required to make choices Chillingworth deduced this rational nature.

Chillingworth's view of the logical method that men must use in making those choices is rather limited. Reason is tied to the "never-failing Rules of Logick."² Men who apply the rules of Aristotelian logic, or "common Notions written by God in the Hearts of all Men . . . ,"³ to the interpretation of the Word of God always follow God. If men by this means draw illogical consequences they have not

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 21, (preface, 28).

²Ibid., p. 15, (preface, 12).

³Ibid.

actually reasoned, but only appear, on the surface, to have done so.¹

Chillingworth's belief in the rational autonomy of man presupposes the goodness of God to the exclusion of all other attributes. God's goodness is one of the main pillars giving the doctrine support. In turn this belief in the goodness of God led him almost to dismiss the concept of sin from his Christian vocabulary. No doctrine of radical evil could coexist with a doctrine of God whose essential attribute is his goodness, and with a doctrine of man whose essential note is his rationality. Errors thus become simply rational aberrations from which man must be excused by a good God. Christ is the son of the good God and by his action men are freed to walk in the path of rational obedience. God himself is the rational being par excellence.

Like the average Englishman, Chillingworth was an instinctive Pelagian.² He shared the outlook of the Scholastics in which "the philosophical system and not the actual world of human history . . . dominated the thinking of Christendom."³ Chillingworth therefore built his system

¹Ibid.

²E. C. E. Bourne, The Anglicanism of William Laud, (London: S. P. C. K., 1947), p. 2.

³Ronald Gregor Smith, The New Man, (London: S. C. M. Press, 1955), p. 35.

on the basis of what man ought to be, according to his unquestioned philosophical presuppositions.

The result of this dependence on scholastic method was that Chillingworth exhibited the tendencies of modern Protestantism to speak of the gospel in a legalistic and moralistic way.¹ It was the tendency to speak in this moralistic manner that led him to assume in all of his work that there was a real difference between the teachings of Christ and the teachings about Christ in the New Testament. Chillingworth had no sympathy with any dogmatic system that did not emphasise the moral responsibilities of Christians. He insisted on a minimum creedal statement because men, if they act in simple earnestness, shall not fail to find salvation, even though they lack a full and complete knowledge of theological statements about God.²

This moralistic tendency led Chillingworth, like the later Protestant orthodoxy, to identify the Word of God with doctrine and faith with assent to this doctrine. Unlike the Reformers, he shirked the problems of a historical faith so that faith became, not encounter with a living Person, but agreement to disembodied truth. Instead of going out into

¹J. S. Whale, The Protestant Tradition, (Cambridge: University Press, 1955), p. 61.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, pp. 148-149, (iii, 13).

the world to face its problems, he "avoided a Machiavellian study of the World as it was; it better accorded with the habits of scholars to remain upon the higher plane of reason and to hope that all the problems might yet be solved by rational investigation."¹

This tendency to think about Christianity in academic, moral, and rational terms was a conscious desire to remain in the via media of the Anglican Church. In assuming this position Chillingworth was constantly moving away from a really Reformed notion of the doctrine of justification by faith. Thus, although there were real differences in outlook, Chillingworth wrote of the place of faith in the same terms as the Roman Catholic divines.

Chillingworth's insistence that St. Paul's teaching concerning the place of love in the Christian life should always be urged and taught together with his emphasis on the radical nature of faith in the Christian life² may have been a needed corrective to the Reformers' tendencies to overstate the case for faith. On the other hand, this was part of his conviction that faith, hope, and charity have an equal function in the Christian life. Therefore, in the spirit of rationalism, he maintained that men should not

¹Weber, op. cit., p. 137.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 382, (vii, 32).

quibble over their relative merits.¹ Also, when this insistence on the function of love is analysed, it becomes clear that he was insisting on its function in a Thomistic sense. It is love that gives faith its form, "fides formata."² That is, love seals and confirms faith in the believer.³ Love sums up the Christian virtues that are required before justification.⁴ When love in this sense is viewed with his analogy of the path to eternal happiness with the trip from Oxford to London, the future reference of justification in Chillingworth's scheme is fully shown. "Justification is thus confused with sanctification (which is perhaps the most serious Roman Heresy)."⁵ Thus, with this doctrine he demonstrates his continuity with the pre-Reformation Church.

The most serious failure with the doctrinal system that Chillingworth presents is the failure to recognize the limitations of reason and logical method. His doctrine admits no serious limitation on the rational man. "His views were rooted in a complete acceptance of the right of private judgement and in an unlimited faith in the power of

¹Ibid., p. 381, (vii, 30).

²Lambeth Palace Library, Lambeth MS, 943, p. 864.

³Chillingworth, Sermons, p. 56, (V, 19).

⁴Ibid., p. 103, (VIII, 31); p. 107, (VIII, 46).

⁵Whale, op. cit., p. 65.

human reason. He regarded all doctrinal formularies as, at best, nothing more than an intimation of saving faith, reserving to his own intelligence the unlimited right of criticism and decision."¹ The limitation of this extreme rationalistic individualism was demonstrated in Chillingworth's personal experience, as related by Clarendon. With an understanding altogether uncommon for his time, Clarendon says that Chillingworth

had spent all his younger Time in Disputation; and had arrived at so great a Mastery, as he was inferior to no Man in those Skirmishes; but he had with this notable Perfection in this Exercise, contracted such an Irresolution and Habit of doubting, that by Degrees He grew confident of Nothing, and a Skeptick at least in the greatest Mysteries of Faith.²

The method of arriving at truth had become completely dominant in Chillingworth's life, and the limitations of reason actually stood in the way of a deeper faith.

Yet another limitation of rationalistic method is the extreme fragmentation of the Church. Mankind, instead of being unified by Christianity, is atomized by Chillingworth's interpretation of it. Instead of the body of Christ encountering the truth in the person of Christ, he asserted that individuals, on their own, seek guidance from a revealed

¹W. K. Jordan, (The Development of Religious Toleration in England 1603-1640), Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936), pp. 383-384.

²Hyde, op. cit., p. 56.

body of supernatural truths.

With these tendencies it was recognized very early that Chillingworth's spiritual home was not with the Reformers, but in actual fact with the Socinians and Arminians. The

first formal charge of Socinianism was made even before he had published The Religion of Protestants. It was made by Knott, in 1636, in his pamphlet entitled A Direction to be observed by N. N. if hee meane to proceed in Answering the Booke intituled, Mercy and Truth, or Charity Maintained by Catholicks &c. The same charge was made by Cheynell, in 1643, in his Book, The Rise, Growth, and Danger of Socinianisme. Of these two charges, the first, by Knott, has no solid foundation unless it be hearsay around Oxford. Knott's charge is made on the basis that all Protestant doctrine, if taken seriously, necessarily issues in the heresy of Socinianism. On the other hand, Cheynell's charge was made on the bases of a thorough study of The Religion of Protestants and a good working knowledge of Socinian literature.¹

Cheynell based his charge on a comparison of statements made by Chillingworth and the statements of a famous Socinian tract, Brevis Disquisitio. Chillingworth, says Cheynell,

¹H. John MacLachlan, Socinianism in Seventeenth Century England, (Oxford: University Press, 1951), pp. 94-95.

comes very neere this Disquistion-monger in his accurate Treatise, for he saith, The Scripture is not to be believed finally for itself, but for the matter contained in it, so that if men did believe the doctrin' contained in the Scripture, it should no way hinder their salvation not to know whether there were any Scripture or no.¹

Cheynell also accuses Chillingworth of Socinianism because Chillingworth was willing to grant Socinians a place in the Church.²

In each of Chillingworth's works there are statements that show that he was influenced by the principles of Socinians and, indeed, of all independents. It was the rational, tolerant, and irenical notes in these unorthodox writers which wakened in Chillingworth and his friends a sympathetic response.³ In Chillingworth's case the clearest line of influence is from Jacobus Acontius and his book, Stratagemata Satanae, a work which antedated Socinius by some thirty years.⁴

Chillingworth shared the same outlook on religion as these Christian humanists. Like both Acontius and Socinius, he starts from the principle that the goal of religion is the gaining of eternal life, and follows the same methods in regarding as essential truth only that which

¹Francis Cheynell, The Rise, Growth, and Danger of Socinianisme, (London: 1643), p. 28.

²Ibid., p. 30.

³Maclachlan, op. cit., p. 89.

⁴Ibid., p. 62.

is agreeable to Scripture and the winning of eternal life.¹

What then was Chillingworth's relationship to the Socinian movement? He stated unequivocally that he abhorred the errors of the Socinians.² On the other hand he had earlier declared that he did not want to force others to a strict orthodox position on the person of Christ:

In a word, whosouer shall freely and impartially consider of this thing, and how on the other side the Ancient Fathers weapons against the Arrians, are in a manner onely places of Scripture, (and those now for the most part discarded as impertinent and unconcluding) and how in the argument drawne from the authority of the Ancient Fathers, they are almost alwayes defendants, and scarce euer opponents; he shall not choose but confesse, or at least be very inclinable to beleue, that the Doctrine of Arrius is eyther a Truth, or at least no damnable Haeresy.³

Reason can not teach men the way to heaven without the aid of supernatural revelation, but it seems to matter very little to Chillingworth who the revealer was. Thus the liberal sentiments of Chillingworth and his friends, Hales and Falkland, were steps in the direction of Socinianism. "It is to the latitudinarian school of religious thinkers, Churchman and Royalists, whose centre in the third decade of the century was Oxford, that we must turn to trace the history of liberal thought, and understand the progress of

¹Ibid.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 21, (preface, 29); Sermons, pp. 58-59, (V, 29).

³Des Maizeaux, op. cit., p. 55.

Socinian ideas."¹ However, these men were too cautious to commit themselves to the full Socinian scheme. They were not willing to take the Socinian doctrines regarding the Trinity and the Atonement.²

Few men, however, in the middle of the seventeenth century were able to distinguish between latitudinarian sentiments and the full doctrinal scheme of the Socinians.³ Hugh Cressy, a Roman Catholic contemporary of Chillingworth's, was willing to admit that making private reason the judge of the Scripture was not a tenet of the Socinians alone, but was held by many who were accounted good Protestants.⁴ Therefore, the fairest evaluation of Chillingworth is not that his opinions "tallied with those in the Confession of Racow, but only that he was in strange spiritual and intellectual accord with the distant sectaries."⁵

The free sentiments for which Chillingworth was stigmatized as a Socinian were popularized by his friends and acquaintances. His broad outlook immediately became the position of Jeremy Taylor. MacLachlan says that it can hardly be an accident that the broad and liberal ideals

¹MacLachlan, op. cit., p. 54. ²Ibid., p. 89.

³Ibid.

⁴Hugh Cressy, Epistle Apologetical, (1674), cited by Tulloch, op. cit., I, 207-208.

⁵Weber, op. cit., p. 129.

of Taylor were also the ideals of Hales and Chillingworth.¹ It is Taylor's, Liberty of Prophecyng, that gave these liberal sentiments a classic statement in the English language. It is in Taylor's work that they become one of the greatest pleas for toleration in the English language. Falkland, too, served as a popularizer of Chillingworth's ideas by putting them in a better English style than Chillingworth could ever muster.² Falkland's, Discourse Against Infallibility, was referred to by a Romanist as " 'Chillingworth's Booke in little, and an Embryo of his large volume growne up after' "³

Chillingworth's liberal sentiments were aimed primarily at one thing only, that is, the combatting of the Roman claim to be infallible. This was the entire aim of The Religion of Protestants. His interests throughout his short life were confined to a sharpening of the logical tools by means of which he sought to destroy the claims of Rome. Christian doctrine and the Bible provided him with axioms to be applied logically to this task. With Chillingworth, as with Lord Falkland, his most intimate companion, the question of an infallible church was the consuming question.⁴

¹MacLachlan, op. cit., pp. 88-89.

²Weber, op. cit., p. 165.

³Ibid., pp. 234-235.

⁴Ibid., p. 158, p. 185.

All other problems were relegated to a secondary status by this interest. This had the effect of narrowing the range of his work and renders the task of making an adequate appraisal of his opinions on the central Christian issues all but impossible.

Consequently, it is necessary to make an appraisal of the total argument against the claims of Rome. The publication history of Chillingworth's book suggests that it was adjudged an excellent answer. It was not an altogether new answer. In many cases, it is only an enlargement of Laud's arguments in his, Conference With Fisher, published in 1622.¹ It is also true that he does not advance much beyond the arguments of Potter's, Want of Charity, which he was defending.

The lasting popularity of The Religion of Protestants cannot be accounted for by the biblical basis that he maintained it to have. His argument actually depends on the absence of sufficient biblical material to support the Roman pretensions to infallibility. Neither does he depend on the arguments against Rome afforded by a thoroughgoing Protestant doctrine of justification by faith.

The popularity must, in some measure, be due to the responsive chord which the rational arguments struck in the

¹Ibid., p. 210.

minds of his readers in the exceedingly rationalistic era which followed its publication. Chillingworth's answer to Rome was really a logical refutation of the Roman arguments on the basis of his conception of personal knowledge. In place of the infallibility of Rome, he urges the rational autonomy of all men and their consequent ability to proceed without the aid of an infallible human guide.

These principles that Chillingworth insists upon in the controversy with Rome are essentially the arguments applied to the same purpose by the Socinians. These arguments "represent that destruction of Catholicism which could be effected on the basis of what was furnished by Scholasticism and the Renaissance" ¹ Nevertheless, Chillingworth carried out his attack with extreme logical rigor and demonstrated that the Roman claim to infallibility must be rationally dismissed by Roman Catholics upon their own grounds. His answer must therefore be granted to possess a real validity.

His claim that it was a Protestant answer with no basis other than Holy Scripture ² is not true. Neither can

¹Adolph Harnack, History of Dogma, trans. William M'Gilchrist, (Vol. XII of the Theological Translation Library, Edited by T. K. Cheyne and A. B. Bruce. London: Williams and Norgate, 1899), VII, 120.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 22, (preface, 30); p. 385, (conclusion).

he be allowed the proposition that there must be an infallible guide for faith and then take his stand on the Bible as the guide that satisfies the condition of infallibility.¹ He did not, in fact, carry out his announced intention. His answers are on other bases entirely.

It was while answering Rome that Chillingworth delivered the one aphorism for which he is still remembered. That statement is: "The BIBLE, the BIBLE only is the Religion of Protestants."² By this he meant that there is no other basis for dogmatic recital than the written revelation. Whale is much too harsh regarding Chillingworth's remark when he says that it is "Too far from the truth to be a good epigram, and too near it to be a clever caricature, it is a misstatement as crude as it is dull."³ In reality it was a telling blow to the Roman pretensions. When that statement is taken out of isolation and viewed against the whole background of Chillingworth's thought it is seen to be very much in line with the Protestant position. Neither, says Chillingworth, tradition nor the Holy Spirit may usurp the place of the Word of God.

¹George Salmon, The Infallibility of the Church, (fourth edition; London: John Murray, 1914), p. 89.

²Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 354, (vi, 56).

³Whale, op. cit., l. 129.

Chillingworth's conscious substitution of the Bible as the supreme authority for Christian faith and morals was his method of supplanting both an infallible individual, the Pope, and ecclesiastical tradition, as the guides for individual men and women. However, nearly all of the errors of orthodox Protestantism have stemmed from this substitution. With orthodox Protestantism, Chillingworth tended to think of the Bible as a supernaturally revealed record of timeless, eternal truths. As such it is analogous to the philosophical systems of the ancients. Thus Chillingworth found in the Bible support for his metaphysical system and the Bible also became amenable to his particular type of logical analysis. No attempt was made to develop the biblical doctrines in a really systematic fashion except as they coincided with that metaphysical system and as they could be deduced by that logical system. As his view was also legalistic, he was not inclined to find any dogma in the Bible other than the barest possible minimum. The Bible was viewed primarily as a record of truth that gave the basis for moral action.

This last tendency in Chillingworth's thought actually became the starting point for the unorthodox rationalists who followed after him. Thus it is that his

works are discussed by the writers of the Restoration.¹ Colligan, in his book, The Arian Movement in England, shows that Chillingworth's statement concerning the strict biblical basis of Protestantism was taken up by the Non-conformists and applied against the established church with a very strict logic.² On Chillingworth's grounds, these men deduced with perfect logic the principle that nothing that was not explicitly stated in the Bible was worthy of a place in Christian dogma. A cry was then raised for a fresh statement of the Christian creed, for the old creeds were no longer accepted as almost synonymous with the Word of God itself.³ This was the necessary intellectual mood before a more serious attempt to gain favor for the Arian and Socinian explanations of the meaning of Christ.

Chillingworth's concepts are therefore those that were later enunciated with even greater clarity and force by many varieties of Protestantism. The good in his view should not be cast out. He was struggling with the idea of individual response to God. Although his answer was

¹John Hunt, Religious Thought in England From the Reformation to the End of the Last Century, (London: Strathan and Company, 1870), I, 374-383; John Stoughton, History of Religion in England, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1881), IV, 309-311.

²J. Hay Colligan, The Arian Movement in England, (Manchester: The University Press, 1913), passim.

³Ibid., p. 93.

imperfect, it was a serious attempt to expose the spurious nature of the then prevailing reliance on authority. Both Protestant and Roman Churches were wont to lean too heavily upon human authority. Chillingworth revolted strongly against all top-heavy expressions of institutional Christianity. His views were strongly personal. Against this institutional authority Chillingworth asserted the transcendent reference of Christianity. His reference was always to God alone. The Reformers, as well as the Pope, remained for him merely men, and they deserved attention only as they remained true to the Word of God and asserted no other authority.

For Chillingworth, the personal moral life was the important factor. All other matters are secondary. Here again, however, there was the ever present spectre of extreme individualism. To "Call no Man Master on Earth, but according to Christ's Command . . . rely on the Direction of God himself,"¹ contains both the element of personal relationship to God and individualistic expression of that faith. Thus Chillingworth, in the seventeenth century, already* contained the thoughts that gave life to pietism and rationalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He was probably himself guilty of a radical subjectivism although he would

¹Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, p. 220, (iv, 53).

have denied it.

On the whole, Chillingworth's contribution to the literature of theology was a defence of the Protestantism of the private conscience. As such, it represents the triumph of Scholasticism and Humanism over the genuinely Protestant principle of justification by faith. He provided a recognized basis upon which the independent spirit almost captured Protestantism. Yet his stand on the Bible provides the only readily available answer to the situation he himself helped to create. In this way he anticipated the mood of the modern ecumenical movement which seeks the unity of the Churches in their common adherence to the Word of God and preserves, as he himself says, the corrective for all of his errors.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

This appendix is an introduction to the unpublished Chillingworth manuscripts. Of the letters that remain all have been published many times. For the most part however, the manuscripts in existence do not correspond to any of the published works. It is clear that the lack of publication is due to three things: The first is that all of them would need such heavy editing for publication that the finished work could scarcely be called Chillingworth's. The second is that these manuscripts do not add much to the knowledge of Chillingworth's thought already possessed from his published works. The third is that the authorship of many of them is doubtful although they are catalogued as Chillingworth's.

The preservation of these manuscripts is primarily due to two men. Most of them were collected, in the first place, by Gilbert Sheldon who had been closely associated with Chillingworth. From Sheldon's hands they passed on to the keeping of Archbishop Sancroft who added many of the titles and a few explanatory notes. By the eighteenth century all of the remaining Chillingworth manuscripts had found their way into the permanent collections of the Bodleian Library and the Lambeth Palace Library where they remain today.

An Papa sit Judex Controversarium Infallibilis.

This is a collection of Latin notes, in Chillingworth's own hand. They are references to Bellarmine and the Fathers on the problem of infallibility.

The Beginning of a Treatise Against the Scots. The title is assigned by Sancroft. It was apparently written near the end of Chillingworth's life. The treatise was prompted by some declarations made by the Scots in 1643-1644 (Des Maizeaux, An Historical and Critical Account of the Life and Writings of William Chillingworth, (London: 1725), pp. 292-297). This is a short polemical piece illustrating Chillingworth's firm allegiance to the Royalist cause. It is a direct accusation of hypocrisy against the Scots and against all Calvinists. There is also an indication of his general abhorrence of all forms of violence.

A brief Answer to several Texts of Scripture alledged to prove the Church to be one, visible, perpetual, and infallible. This is the most systematic of the Chillingworth manuscripts. The left-hand column of the page contains references to Scripture passages classified according to their use in the Church of Rome. On the right, Chillingworth has added remarks to the effect that none of these passages is conclusive. If they do indeed speak of the Church it is not the institutional Church but the ideal or invisible Church, but they apply to churches only as the churches conform to them. He also adds a number of

references to Augustine that may be used to confute the Roman claims.

Concerning the Lawfullnesse and expedience, of having the Publique Service of the Church in a language not understood by the Assistants, is Chillingworth's title and it covers the contents. This manuscript is very interesting because it shows Chillingworth at his best in invective. He likens the Latin service of the Roman Church to the conjurations of magicians and the rites of pagans. The Latin service rather than edifying is actually a means by which the church retains an illegitimate power over its adherents.

Errorum in Ecclesia Romana Gradus et Incrementa. The title was apparently added by Sancroft. These are again Latin notes and references to the Fathers which point to the changes in the Roman dogma through the ages. This indicates that Chillingworth left nothing to chance in his controversies. He collected the references used by his opponents and studied them. In this way he pointed out the inconclusiveness of the Roman arguments.

It is not onely lawfull, but pious and necessary for a Roman Catholick to come to Church in England. This was copied for Sancroft and was reputed to be by Chillingworth, but Sancroft was extremely doubtful. Most of it he says is found in a "popish treatise" by Dr. Featley. The thesis

propounded is that "It is not unlawfull for a Roman Catholick to come to Church in England. Because there is no fault, neither in the Substance of the Action there to be performed by him, nor in the circumstances of them." (p. 125).

A Larger Discourse of the Nature of Faith. This manuscript must be viewed with the others on the same subject. It can be assigned to Chillingworth only with reservation. The signature indicates that it was written as a letter, and it may be addressed to Chillingworth rather than written by him. The signature is "Will Bonmete," a pseudonym which is nowhere recorded as belonging to Chillingworth. Also, it is actually composed of two distinct papers; the center pages, in a very different handwriting from that of Chillingworth, speak of Chillingworth in the third person. The argument is about the nature of faith as a metaphysical reality. Faith, it is asserted, is not scientific knowledge, but it has validity because it is rooted in the reality of God. The material in this manuscript is almost exactly paralleled by that in the first nine paragraphs of the seventh chapter of The Religion of Protestants, and it may be a debate occasioned by its publication. This argument also has affinities with the material in the Answer to Mr. Peake's five Questions.

Notes of Mr. Chillingworth concerning God's universal Mercy in calling Men to Repentance. The title has been

added, apparently, by Sancroft. In this paper Chillingworth dwells on the goodness of God as shown in the gift of Christ to man. By means of this gift God calls men to repentance and crowns them with glory. This is the only instance in which he stresses the satisfaction of Christ and he does it here against the Socinians who maintain that men are instated in the love of God even before the death and resurrection of Christ.

Observations upon the Scottish Declaration. This is another accusation of hypocrisy directed against the Scots. In addition he adds some further political arguments and concludes that none of the Scottish arguments in any way warrants the entry of an army into England.

Of the Absurdity of Departing from the Church of England, for want of Succession of visible Professors in all Ages. The title has been assigned by Sancroft. The argument of this very short paper is that true succession depends entirely on the will of God. Men may know that will without the ability to acknowledge the succession of that truth through all history. The Church of England therefore depends only upon the present will of God.

Passages extracted out of the Declaration of the Scots. These are copies of passages in one of the Scottish declarations to which Chillingworth intended to give a full answer.

Mr. Peake's five Questions proposed to Mr. Chillingworth about the Nature of Faith, and the Resolution and Consequence of the Faith of Protestants. This is Chillingworth's copy of five questions propounded to him concerning the nature and efficacy of rational faith and its doctrinal consequences.

Mr. Chillingworth's Answer to the Same. The catalogue says that this is incomplete, meaning that some of the pages are missing. (See the next note).

Mr. Chillingworth's Answer to the Same. The catalogue states that this copy is "complete and perfect," meaning only that all the pages are apparently there. However, it is not an apt description. In Chillingworth's own handwriting, this manuscript contains at least seven incomplete answers to the questions proposed by Peake, and each of the answers varies slightly from the others in language and in the analogies used. Neither is it possible to find a complete answer by combining the partial answers. Chillingworth's purpose was to show that God may produce faith in men by means which are completely rational. God works according to the nature of man, and this natural faith, when it works by love, results in the obedience by which a man shall be justified.

A Shorter Discourse of the Nature of Faith. This manuscript is assigned to Chillingworth only with some

reservations. The signature varies slightly from the other on the same subject. This time it is "W. Bemoet." The argument is that faith, to be truly Christian, must be more than mere assent to truth and more than merely prudence. Christian faith is assent based on the truth of the proposition, "God says so therefore it is true." In the end the author cites Aquinas to bolster the argument that rational faith is based on the certainty of God.

A Treatise of the Unlawfulness of resisting the lawful Prince, although most impious, tyrannical, and idolatrous. Although this manuscript does not appear to be in Chillingworth's own handwriting, the material has very close parallels in The Religion of Protestants, and its originality does not seem to be in doubt. It appears to be part of the answer that Chillingworth was preparing, to the Parliamentary, or Scots, divines. He is attempting to muster arguments to show that war may not be justified on biblical grounds.

Remarks upon the 39 Articles, is Sancroft's title, and he adds that they were apparently "written when he Chillingworth was going, or gone, over to the Church of Rome." These are personal notes in Latin and show Chillingworth's early study of the Thirty-nine Articles by reference to the Fathers. There are very few direct statements, which indicates that it was more a study guide than anything else.

Chillingworth's conversion back to Church of England.

This title is my own. This manuscript contains an account by an anonymous author of Chillingworth's return to the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church. It is all reproduced in chapter one of this thesis. The catalogue states that it is part of a collection of accounts of treason by a Roman Catholic author. It does add some names to the account that are not otherwise mentioned, but why it should be part of this particular collection is not apparent.